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THE HOWELLS STORY BOOK



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MR. HOWELLS IN HIS STUDY.

THE
HOWELLS STORY BOOK

EDITED BY

MARY F. WEST

WITH REDUCTIONS BY
HOWELLS

ILLUSTRATED BY MARY F. HOWELLS

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

BOSTON



THE HOWELLS STORY BOOK

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MARY E. BURT

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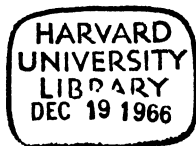
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B

TO SEVEN
YOUNG GENTLEMEN
OF THE BOYS' TOWN
FREDERICK HORACE
SCOTT FREDDY
BAYARD RUDOLPH
NORTON

PREFACE

THE HOWELLS STORY BOOK has come in response to an invitation of seven years' standing from a warm constituency among the teachers and school children who had read and loved many of the author's stories. In this seven years many "regular reading-books" have come and gone, living their brief lives and dying a natural death; but the old request for the Howells Book holds good, the author, year by year, having proved his right to a throne among the American writers who have been crowned permanent.

Mr. Howells's greatest fortress is on the heights in the world of fiction. There he is intrenched for the coming ages. John Burroughs writes: "You cannot praise his style and craftsmanship too much. He is wonderfully realistic. There is a great charm in his style—his fine artistic workmanship." Years ago a famous critic said of him: "Mr. Howells has made over the American novel, taught it

gracefulness and compactness, and has given it a place in literature along with the best of modern work." It is not the external beauty, however, of Mr. Howells's work that has given it its place in literature, but the vital touch, the interpretation of human sympathies and aspirations and needs. That much-abused word, "Realism," which has too often been flaunted in the face of the long-suffering public, serving as a cloak to cover the vapid writing which, at best, is a reflection of the bad condition of a gossip-loving aspirant to public notice, is rescued from its small fame by the master-hand of a Howells. With him "Realism" means insight as well as oversight, the power to select what is worthy and of good report. It means creativeness not far removed from the imaginative powers of a poet—a Tennyson or a Sir Walter Scott. To me the charm of Howells is not in his "Realism" but in his extreme modesty and shyness, his tenderness toward human beings. The altruistic spirit has more and more developed in his writings. This is shown not only in his novels but in his books for children. In "The Boys' Town" he speaks of the circus-rider, the printer, the schoolmaster, the dull little playmate, the town tippler, and of his own brother, with

a deference born of reverence, "the master-key of knowledge." You feel in his writings the hovering of a world-spirit that yearns to protect the weak and helpless and foolish. He is free from the trammels of society and fashion, and does not live to satisfy traditions. He has the heart of a little child, and his great genius as a realist, which serves him so well in his novels, radiates even from his fairy stories.

The fairy tale of former centuries dealt with the supernatural, but held the germs of modern scientific truths and inventions. The "Arabian Nights" had an Enchanted Horse which could be sent flying to any part of the world by turning a peg in his neck. "The Pony Engine" of the New Fairy Tale of Howells is the Enchanted Horse come true; you turn the peg in his neck and he flies from one end of the continent to the other, with the advantage of an idealized realism, and a moral too subtle and gay to disturb the child's dream of the wonderful, but not too subtle to fail of carrying moral conviction. America is developing a fairy-lore of its own based on the wonders of modern invention and the trend of modern thought and experiences. Among these are the "Rip Van Winkle" of Irving, "The Great Stone Face" by Hawthorne, "The Good Grif-

fin and the Minor Canon" of Stockton, "The Pony Engine" and several other of Howells's fairy tales. These stories are not born to die, and they carry their nationality stamped on their faces as do the fairy tales of every land. Mr. Howells's novels represent his power at high tide, but even his simple fairy tales predict the power of his work for adults. And these fairy tales are saturated with father-heart and the boyishness hidden in the man that made him a play-fellow with the wee people to whom they were told. They were invented for the most part in the witching hours of early morning twilight, the fairyland hour when birds preen and shake out their ruffled feathers, the play-spell, the time of pillow-fights for children. These were valuable moments to the boy-hearted man, and he spun off his yarns and made them wild purposely to call down on his head the pretended wrath of the little people, in a shower of loving blows. "Those soft little fists pounding me; that was all the fun there was in it," the author has remarked; and in this one sentence stands revealed the spirit at once so sensitive to the touches of a baby's hand, the small things of the world, and the social and political conditions of nations, the great things of the

world. And Howells, more than any other writer, comes into the child's mood in the use of language. He slyly lies in wait for "the little pigs," and under cover of burlesque attacks their un-English use of "just perfectly horrid" expressions. And his use of this childhood vocabulary adds a literary flavor to the stories. There is no mistaking his gentle railery, his recognition of the childhood dialect, for approval of bad English.

As Cable is a Southern cavalier in manners, feeling, and writing, so Howells represents the North, especially the Western North, his native land. In the few chapters from "A Boy's Town" given in this book we recognize a true picture of conditions not only of Ohio but of Wisconsin, Illinois, and all the Middle West.

All of the selections in the book have been made after reading and rereading them with several classes of pupils in primary and lower grammar grades, and such studies have been chosen as invariably evoked responsive and voluntary enthusiasm. I shall never forget my introduction to the fairy tales. The wife of a Western school superintendent came into my room bringing "Christmas Every Day," which had just appeared in a child's magazine. She

exclaimed: "I have found the best Christmas story that ever was written!" and read it to me, laughing all through it from beginning to end. I read it to my pupils, and from that day to this it has been one of my favorite stories for the Christmas season.

"The Pony Engine" has served as the basis for many an example in arithmetic, too, and we have lightened the tediousness of cold multiplication and division by computing the miles traversed and the time necessary for him to escape from the Pacific express. In Europe even more than America, where the public taste is more critical, Howells is recognized as a writer who has achieved an enviable greatness. It is as common to find his works on news-stands as it is, in this country, to find sensational pamphlets and novels whose only merit is their newness.

This book is one that I want to use in my own work. I believe in it. I have long held fast to the hope of its coming. It is a pride and pleasure to me to put my hand to it. Here is another standard writer of my own country and another loyal soul come to strengthen the educational literature of my own school-room and all school-rooms. American literature is not fairly represented without him. I have

only one regret in it, and that is that the poet, the essayist, and the novelist cannot be fairly represented in one small volume.

MARY E. BURT.

THE JOHN A. BROWNING SCHOOL,
NEW YORK, May 1, 1900.



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PART I

FAIRY TALES

PART I
FAIRY TALES



THE little girl came into her papa's study, as she always did Saturday morning before breakfast, and asked for a story. He tried to beg off that morning, for he was very busy, but she would not let him. So he began:

"Well, once there was a little pig——"

She put her hand over his mouth and stopped him at the word. She said she had heard little-pig stories till she was perfectly sick of them.

"Well, what kind of story *shall* I tell, then?"

"About Christmas. It's getting to be the season. It's past Thanksgiving already."

"It seems to me," her papa argued, "that

I've told as often about Christmas as I have about little pigs."

"No difference! Christmas is more interesting."

"Well!" Her papa roused himself from his writing by a great effort. "Well, then, I'll tell you about the little girl that wanted it Christmas every day in the year. How would you like that?"

"First-rate!" said the little girl; and she nestled into comfortable shape in his lap, ready for listening.

"Very well, then, this little pig— Oh, what are you pounding me for?"

"Because you said little pig instead of little girl."

"I should like to know what's the difference between a little pig and a little girl that wanted it Christmas every day!"

"Papa!" said the little girl, warningly, "if you don't go on, I'll *give* it to you!" And at this her papa darted off like lightning, and began to tell the story as fast as he could.

Well, once there was a little girl who liked Christmas so much that she wanted it to be Christmas every day in the year; and as soon as Thanksgiving was over she began to send

postal-cards to the old Christmas Fairy to ask if she might have it so.

But the old Fairy never answered any of the postals; and after a while the little girl found out that the Fairy was pretty particular, and wouldn't notice anything but letters—not even correspondence cards in envelopes; but real letters on sheets of paper, and sealed outside with a monogram—or your initial, anyway.

So, then, she began to send her letters; and in about three weeks—or just the day before Christmas, it was—she got a letter from the Fairy, saying she might have it Christmas every day for a year, and then they would see about having it longer.

The little girl was a good deal excited already, preparing for the old-fashioned, once-a-year Christmas that was coming the next day, and perhaps the Fairy's promise didn't make such an impression on her as it would have made at some other time. She just resolved to keep it to herself, and surprise everybody with it as it kept coming true; and then it slipped out of her mind altogether.

She had a splendid Christmas. She went to bed early, so as to let Santa Claus have a chance at the stockings, and in the morning she was up the first of anybody and went and felt them,

and found hers all lumpy with packages of candy and oranges and grapes, and pocket-books and rubber balls, and all kinds of small presents, and her big brother's with nothing but the tongs in them and her young lady sister's with a new silk umbrella, and her papa's and mamma's with potatoes and pieces of coal wrapped up in tissue-paper, just as they always had every Christmas.

Then she waited around till the rest of the family were up, and she was the first to burst into the library, when the doors were opened, and look at the large presents laid out on the library-table—books, and portfolios, and boxes of stationery, and breastpins, and dolls, and little stoves, and dozens of handkerchiefs, and ink-stands, and skates, and snow-shovels, and photograph-frames, and little easels, and boxes of water-colors, and Turkish paste, and nougat, and candied cherries, and dolls' houses, and waterproofs'—and the big Christmas-tree, lighted and standing in a waste-basket in the middle.

She had a splendid Christmas all day. She ate so much candy that she did not want any breakfast; and the whole forenoon the presents kept pouring in that the expressman had not had time to deliver the night before; and she

went round giving the presents she had got for other people, and came home and ate turkey and cranberry for dinner, and plum-pudding and nuts and raisins and oranges and more candy, and then went out and coasted, and came in with a stomach-ache, crying; and her papa said he would see if his house was turned into that sort of fool's paradise another year; and they had a light supper, and pretty early everybody went to bed cross.

Here the little girl pounded her papa in the back again.

"Well, what now? Did I say pigs?"

"You made them *act* like pigs."

"Well, didn't they?"

"No matter; you oughtn't to put it into a story."

"Very well, then, I'll take it all out."

Her father went on:

The little girl slept very heavily, and she slept very late, but she was wakened at last by the other children dancing round her bed with their stockings full of presents in their hands.

"What is it?" said the little girl, and she rubbed her eyes and tried to rise up in bed.

"Christmas! Christmas! Christmas!" they all shouted, and waved their stockings.

"Nonsense! It was Christmas yesterday."

Her brothers and sisters just laughed. "We don't know about that. It's Christmas to-day, anyway. You come into the library and see."

Then all at once it flashed on the little girl that the Fairy was keeping her promise, and her year of Christmases was beginning. She was dreadfully sleepy, but she sprang up like a lark—a lark that had overeaten itself and gone to bed cross—and darted into the library. There it was again! Books, and portfolios, and boxes of stationery, and breastpins—

"You needn't go over it all, papa; I guess I can remember just what was there," said the little girl.

Well, and there was the Christmas tree blazing away, and the family picking out their presents, but looking pretty sleepy, and her father perfectly puzzled, and her mother ready to cry. "I'm sure I don't see how I'm to dispose of all these things," said her mother, and her father said it seemed to him they had had something just like it the day before, but he supposed he must have dreamed it.

This struck the little girl as the best kind of a joke; and so she ate so much candy she didn't

want any breakfast, and went round carrying presents, and had turkey and cranberry for dinner, and then went out and coasted, and came in with a——

“Papa!”

“Well, what now?”

“What did you promise, you forgetful thing?”

“Oh! oh yes!”

Well, the next day it was just the same thing over again, but everybody getting crosser; and at the end of a week's time so many people had lost their tempers that you could pick up lost tempers anywhere; they perfectly strewed the ground. Even when people tried to recover their tempers they usually got somebody else's, and it made the most dreadful mix.

The little girl began to get frightened, keeping the secret all to herself; she wanted to tell her mother, but she didn't dare to; and she was ashamed to ask the Fairy to take back her gift, it seemed ungrateful and ill-bred, and she thought she would try to stand it, but she hardly knew how she could, for a whole year. So it went on and on, and it was Christmas on St. Valentine's Day and Washington's Birthday, just the same as any day, and it

didn't skip even the First of April, though everything was counterfeit that day, and that was some *little* relief.

After a while coal and potatoes began to be awfully scarce, so many had been wrapped up in tissue-paper to fool papas and mammas with. Turkeys got to be about a thousand dollars apiece——

“ Papa !”

“ Well, what ?”

“ You're beginning to fib.”

“ Well, *two* thousand, then.”

And they got to passing off almost anything for turkeys—half-grown humming-birds, and even rocs out of the “ Arabian Nights ”—the real turkeys were so scarce. And cranberries—well, they asked a diamond apiece for cranberries. All the woods and orchards were cut down for Christmas-trees, and where the woods and orchards used to be it looked just like a stubble-field, with the stumps.

After a while they had to make Christmas-trees out of rags, and stuff them with bran, like old-fashioned dolls; but there were plenty of rags, because people got so poor, buying presents for one another, that they couldn't get

any new clothes, and they just wore their old ones to tatters. They got so poor that everybody had to go to the poor-house, except the confectioners, and the fancy-store keepers, and the picture-book sellers, and the expressmen; and *they* all got so rich and proud that they would hardly wait upon a person when he came to buy. It was perfectly shameful!

Well, after it had gone on about three or four months, the little girl, whenever she came into the room in the morning and saw those great ugly, lumpy stockings dangling at the fire-place, and the disgusting presents around everywhere, used to just sit down and burst out crying. In six months she was perfectly exhausted; she couldn't even cry any more; she just lay on the lounge and rolled her eyes and panted. About the beginning of October she took to sitting down on the dolls wherever she found them—French dolls, or any kind—she hated the sight of them so; and by Thanksgiving she was crazy, and just slammed her presents across the room.

By that time people didn't carry presents around nicely any more. They flung them over the fence, or through the window, or anything; and, instead of running their tongues out and taking great pains to write "For dear Papa,"

or "Mamma," or "Brother," or "Sister," or "Susie," or "Sammie," or "Billie," or "Bobbie," or "Jimmie," or "Jennie," or whoever it was, and troubling to get the spelling right, and then signing their names, and "Xmas, 18—," they used to write in the gift-books, "Take it, you horrid old thing!" and then go and bang it against the front door.

Nearly everybody had built barns to hold their presents, but pretty soon the barns overflowed, and then they used to let them lie out in the rain, or anywhere. Sometimes the police used to come and tell them to shovel their presents off the sidewalk, or they would arrest them.

"I thought you said everybody had gone to the poor-house," interrupted the little girl.

"They did go, at first," said her papa; "but after a while the poor-houses got so full that they had to send the people back to their own houses. They tried to cry, when they got back, but they couldn't make the least sound."

"Why couldn't they?"

"Because they had lost their voices, saying 'Merry Christmas' so much. Did I tell you how it was on the Fourth of July?"

"No; how was it?" And the little girl



THE POLICE TOLD THEM TO SHOVEL THEIR PRESENTS OFF FROM THE SIDEWALK.

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nestled closer, in expectation of something uncommon.

Well, the night before, the boys stayed up to celebrate, as they always do, and fell asleep before twelve o'clock, as usual, expecting to be wakened by the bells and cannon. But it was nearly eight o'clock before the first boy in the United States woke up, and then he found out what the trouble was. As soon as he could get his clothes on he ran out of the house and smashed a big cannon-torpedo down on the pavement; but it didn't make any more noise than a damp wad of paper; and after he tried about twenty or thirty more, he began to pick them up and look at them. Every single torpedo was a big raisin! Then he just streaked it up-stairs, and examined his fire-crackers and toy-pistol and two-dollar collection of fireworks, and found that they were nothing but sugar and candy painted up to look like fireworks! Before ten o'clock every boy in the United States found out that his Fourth of July things had turned into Christmas things; and then they just sat down and cried—they were so mad. There are about twenty million boys in the United States, and so you can imagine what a noise they made.

Some men got together before night, with a little powder that hadn't turned into purple sugar yet, and they said they would fire off *one* cannon, anyway. But the cannon burst into a thousand pieces, for it was nothing but rock candy, and some of the men nearly got killed. The Fourth of July orations all turned into Christmas carols, and when anybody tried to read the Declaration, instead of saying, "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary," he was sure to sing, "God rest you, merry gentlemen." It was perfectly awful.

The little girl drew a deep sigh of satisfaction.

"And how was it at Thanksgiving?"

Her papa hesitated. "Well, I'm almost afraid to tell you. I'm afraid you'll think it's wicked."

"Well, tell, anyway," said the little girl.

Well, before it came Thanksgiving it had leaked out who had caused all these Christmases. The little girl had suffered so much that she had talked about it in her sleep; and after that hardly anybody would play with her. People just perfectly despised her, because if it had not been for her greediness it wouldn't have happened; and now, when it

came Thanksgiving, and she wanted them to go to church, and have squash-pie and turkey, and show their gratitude, they said that all the turkeys had been eaten up for her old Christmas dinners, and if she would stop the Christmases they would see about the gratitude. Wasn't it dreadful? And the very next day the little girl began to send letters to the Christmas Fairy, and then telegrams, to stop it. But it didn't do any good; and then she got to calling at the Fairy's house, but the girl that came to the door always said, "Not at home," or "Engaged," or "At dinner," or something like that; and so it went on till it came to the old once-a-year Christmas Eve. The little girl fell asleep, and when she woke up in the morning——

"She found it was all nothing but a dream," suggested the little girl.

"No, indeed!" said her papa. "It was all every bit true!"

"Well, what *did* she find out, then?"

"Why, that it wasn't Christmas at last, and wasn't ever going to be, any more. Now it's time for breakfast."

The little girl held her papa fast around the neck.

"You sha'n't go if you're going to leave it so !"

"How do you want it left ?"

"Christmas once a year."

"All right," said her papa ; and he went on again.

Well, there was the greatest rejoicing all over the country, and it extended clear up into Canada. The people met together everywhere, and kissed and cried for joy. The city carts went around and gathered up all the candy and raisins and nuts, and dumped them into the river ; and it made the fish perfectly sick ; and the whole United States, as far out as Alaska, was one blaze of bonfires, where the children were burning up their gift-books and presents of all kinds. They had the greatest *time !*

The little girl went to thank the old Fairy because she had stopped its being Christmas, and she said she hoped she would keep her promise and see that Christmas never, never came again.

Then the Fairy frowned, and asked her if she was sure she knew what she meant ; and the little girl asked her, Why not ? and the old Fairy said that now she was behaving just as

greedily as ever, and she'd better look out. This made the little girl think it all over carefully again, and she said she would be willing to have it Christmas about once in a thousand years; and then she said a hundred, and then she said ten, and at last she got down to one. Then the Fairy said that was the good old way that had pleased people ever since Christmas began and she agreed. Then the little girl said, "What're your shoes made of?" And the Fairy said, "Leather." And the little girl said, "Bargain's done forever," and skipped off, and hippity-hopped the whole way home, she was so glad.

"How will that do?" asked the papa.

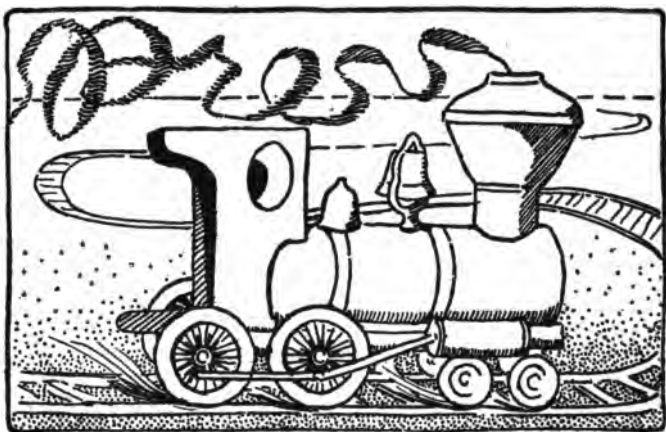
"First-rate!" said the little girl; but she hated to have the story stop, and was rather sober. However, her mamma put her head in at the door, and asked her papa:

"Are you never coming to breakfast? What have you been telling that child?"

"Oh, just a moral tale."

The little girl caught him around the neck again.

"*We* know! Don't you tell *what*, papa! Don't you tell *what*!"



THE PONY ENGINE & THE PACIFIC EXPRESS.

CHRISTMAS-EVE, after the children had hung up their stockings and got all ready for St. Nic, they climbed up on the papa's lap to kiss him good-night, and when they both got their arms round his neck, they said they were not going to bed till he told them a Christmas story. Then he saw that he would have to mind, for they were awfully severe with him, and always made him do exactly what they told him ; it was the way they had brought him up.

He tried his best to get out of it for a while ; but after they had shaken him first this side, and then that side, and pulled him backward and forward till he did not know where he was, he began to think perhaps he had better begin. The first thing he said, after he opened his eyes and made believe he had been asleep, or something, was, " Well, where did I leave off ? " and that made them just perfectly boiling, for they understood his tricks, and they knew he was trying to pretend that he had told part of the story already ; and they said he had not left off anywhere because he had not commenced, and he saw it was no use. So he commenced.

" Once there was a little Pony Engine that used to play round the Fitchburg Depot on the side tracks, and sleep in among the big locomotives in the car-house——"

The little girl lifted her head from the papa's shoulder, where she had dropped it. " Is it a sad story, papa ? "

" How is it going to end ? " asked the boy.

" Well, it's got a moral," said the papa.

" Oh, all right, if it's got a moral," said the children ; they had a good deal of fun with the morals the papa put to his stories. The boy added, " Go on," and the little girl prompted, " Car-house."

The papa said, "Now every time you stop me I shall have to begin all over again." But he saw that this was not going to spite them any, so he went on: "One of the locomotives was its mother, and she had got hurt once in a big smash-up, so that she couldn't run long trips any more. She was so weak in the chest you could hear her wheeze as far as you could see her. But she could work round the depot, and pull empty cars in and out, and shunt them off on the side tracks; and she was so anxious to be useful that all the other engines respected her, and they were very kind to the little Pony Engine on her account, though it was always getting in the way, and under their wheels, and everything.

They all knew it was an orphan, for before its mother got hurt its father went through a bridge one dark night into an arm of the sea, and was never heard of again; he was supposed to have been drowned. The old mother locomotive used to say that it would never have happened if she had been there; but poor dear No. 236 was always so venturesome, and she had warned him against that very bridge time and again. Then she would whistle so dolefully, and sigh with her air-brakes enough to make anybody cry.

You see they used to be a very happy family when they were all together, before the papa locomotive got drowned. He was very fond of the little Pony Engine, and told it stories at night after they got into the car-house, at the end of some of his long runs. It would get up on his cow-catcher and lean its chimney up against his, and listen till it fell asleep. Then he would put it softly down, and be off again in the morning before it was awake. I tell you, those were happy days for poor No. 236. The little Pony Engine could just remember him; it was awfully proud of its papa."

"She used to caution the little Pony Engine against getting in the way of the big locomotives, and told it to keep close round after her, and try to do all it could to learn about shifting empty cars. You see, she knew how ambitious the little Pony Engine was, and how it wasn't contented a bit just to grow up in the pony-engine business, and be tied down to the depot all its days. Once she happened to tell it that if it was good and always did what it was bid, perhaps a cow-catcher would grow on it some day, and then it could be a passenger locomotive. Mammass have to promise all sorts of things, and she was almost distracted when she said that."

"I don't think she ought to have deceived it, papa," said the boy. "But it ought to have known that if it was a Pony Engine to begin with, it never could have a cow-catcher."

"Couldn't it?" asked the little girl, gently.

"No; they're kind of mooley."

The little girl asked the papa, "What makes Pony Engines mooley?" for she did not choose to be told by her brother; he was only two years older than she was, anyway.

"Well, it's pretty hard to say. You see, when a locomotive is first hatched——"

"Oh, are they hatched, papa?" asked the boy.

"Well, we'll *call* it hatched," said the papa; but they knew he was just funning. "They're about the size of tea-kettles at first; and it's a chance whether they will have cow-catchers or not. If they keep their spouts, they will; and if their spouts drop off, they won't."

"What makes the spout ever drop off?"

"Oh, sometimes the pip, or the gapes——"

The children both began to shake the papa, and he was glad enough to go on sensibly. "Well, anyway, the mother locomotive certainly oughtn't to have deceived it. Still she had to say *something*, and perhaps the little Pony Engine was better employed watching its buffers with its head-light, to see whether its

cow-catcher had begun to grow, than it would have been in listening to the stories of the old locomotives, and sometimes their swearing."

"Do they swear, papa?" asked the little girl, somewhat shocked, and yet pleased.

"Well, I never heard them, *near by*. But it sounds a good deal like swearing when you hear them on the up-grade on our hill in the night. Where was I?"

"Swearing," said the boy. "And please don't go back, now, papa."

"Well, I won't. It'll be as much as I can do to get through this story, without going over any of it again. Well, the thing that the little Pony Engine wanted to be the most in this world, was the locomotive of the Pacific Express, that starts out every afternoon at three, you know. It intended to apply for the place as soon as its cow-catcher was grown, and it was always trying to attract the locomotive's attention, backing and filling on the track alongside of the train; and once it raced it a little piece, and beat it, before the Express locomotive was under way, and almost got in front of it on a switch. My, but its mother was scared! She just yelled to it with her whistle; and that night she sent it to sleep without a particle of coal or water in its tender.

"But the little Pony Engine didn't care. It had beaten the Pacific Express in a hundred yards, and what was to hinder it from beating it as long as it chose? The little Pony Engine could not get it out of its head. It was just like a boy who thinks he can whip a man."

The boy lifted his head. "Well, a boy *can*, papa, if he goes to do it the right way. Just stoop down before the man knows it, and catch him by the legs and tip him right over."

"Ho! I guess you see yourself!" said the little girl, scornfully.

"Well, I *could*!" said the boy; "and some day I'll just show you."

"Now, little cock-sparrow, now!" said the papa; and he laughed. "Well, the little Pony Engine thought he could beat the Pacific Express, anyway; and so one dark, snowy, blowy afternoon, when his mother was off pushing some empty coal cars up past the Know-Nothing crossing beyond Charlestown, he got on the track in front of the Express, and when he heard the conductor say 'All aboard,' and the starting gong struck, and the brakemen leaned out and waved to the engineer, he darted off like lightning. He had his steam up, and he just scuttled.

"Well, he was so excited for a while that he

couldn't tell whether the Express was gaining on him or not ; but after twenty or thirty miles, he thought he heard it pretty near. Of course the Express locomotive was drawing a heavy train of cars, and it had to make a stop or two—at Charlestown, and at Concord Junction, and at Ayer—so the Pony Engine did really gain on it a little ; and when it began to be scared it gained a good deal. But the first place where it began to feel sorry, and to want its mother, was in Hoosac Tunnel. It never was in a tunnel before, and it seemed as if it would never get out. It kept thinking, What if the Pacific Express was to run over it there in the dark, and its mother off there at the Fitchburg Depot, in Boston, looking for it among the side-tracks? It gave a perfect shriek ; and just then it shot out of the tunnel. There were a lot of locomotives loafing around there at North Adams, and one of them shouted out to it as it flew by, 'What's your hurry, little one?' and it just screamed back, 'Pacific Express!' and never stopped to explain. They talked in locomotive language——"

"Oh, what did it sound like?" the boy asked.

"Well, pretty queer ; I'll tell you some day. It knew it had no time to fool away, and all through the long, dark night, whenever a loco-

motive hailed it, it just screamed, ‘Pacific Express!’ and kept on. And the Express kept gaining on it. Some of the locomotives wanted to stop it, but they decided they had better not get in its way, and so it whizzed along across New York State and Ohio and Indiana, till it got to Chicago. And the Express kept gaining on it. By that time it was so hoarse it could hardly whisper, but it kept saying, ‘Pacific Express! Pacific Express!’ and it kept right on till it reached the Mississippi River. There it found a long train of freight cars before it on the bridge. It couldn’t wait, and so it slipped down from the track to the edge of the river and jumped across, and then scrambled up the embankment to the track again.”

“Papa!” said the little girl, warningly.

“Truly it did,” said the papa.

“Ho! that’s nothing,” said the boy. “A whole train of cars did it in that Jules Verne book.”

“Well,” the papa went on, “after that it had a little rest, for the Express had to wait for the freight train to get off the bridge, and the Pony Engine stopped at the first station for a drink of water and a mouthful of coal, and then it flew ahead. There was a kind old locomotive at Omaha that tried to find out where it be-

longed, and what its mother's name was, but the Pony Engine was so bewildered it couldn't tell. And the Express kept gaining on it. On the plains it was chased by a pack of prairie wolves, but it left them far behind; and the antelopes were scared half to death. But the worst of it was when the nightmare got after it."

"The nightmare? Goodness!" said the boy.

"I've had the nightmare," said the little girl.

"Oh, yes, a mere human nightmare," said the papa. "But a locomotive nightmare is a very different thing."

"Why, what's it like?" asked the boy. The little girl was almost afraid to ask.

"Well, it has only one leg, to begin with."

"Pshaw!"

"Wheel, I mean. And it has four cow-catchers, and four head-lights, and two boilers, and eight whistles, and it just goes whirling and screeching along. Of course, it wobbles awfully; and as it's only got one wheel, it has to keep skipping from one track to the other."

"I should think it would run on the cross-ties," said the boy.

"Oh, very well, then!" said the papa. "If you know so much more about it than I do! Who's telling this story, anyway? Now, I

shall have to go back to the beginning. Once there was a little Pony En——”

They both put their hands over his mouth, and just fairly begged him to go on, and at last he did. “Well, it got away from the nightmare about morning, but not till the nightmare had bitten a large piece out of its tender, and then it braced up for the home-stretch. It thought that if it could once beat the Express to the Sierras, it could keep the start the rest of the way, for it could get over the mountains quicker than the Express could, and it might be in San Francisco before the Express got to Sacramento. The Express kept gaining on it. But it just zipped along the upper edge of Kansas and the lower edge of Nebraska, and on through Colorado and Utah and Nevada, and when it got to the Sierras it just stooped a little, and went over them like a goat; it did, truly; just doubled up its fore wheels under it, and jumped. And the Express kept gaining on it.

“By this time it couldn’t say ‘Pacific Express’ any more, and it didn’t try. It just said ‘Express! Express!’ and then ‘Press! Press!’ and then ‘Ess! Ess!’ and pretty soon only ‘Ss!’ ‘Ss!’ And the Express kept gaining on it. Before they reached San Francisco the Express locomotive’s cow-catcher was almost



THE PONY ENGINE WAS CHASED BY A LOCOMOTIVE NIGHTMARE WITH FOUR COW-CATCHERS.

touching the Pony Engine's tender. It gave one howl of anguish as it felt the Express locomotive's hot breath on the place where the nightmare had bitten the piece out, and tore through the end of the San Francisco depot, and plunged into the Pacific Ocean, and was never seen again. There now," said the papa, trying to make the children get down, "that's all. Go to bed." The little girl was crying, and so he tried to comfort her by keeping her in his lap.

The boy cleared his throat. "What is the moral, papa?" he asked, huskily.

"Children, obey your parents," said the papa.

"And what became of the mother locomotive?" pursued the boy.

"She had a brain fever, and never quite recovered the use of her mind again."

The boy thought awhile. "Well, I don't see what it had to do with Christmas, anyway."

"Why, it was Christmas Eve when the Pony Engine started from Boston, and Christmas afternoon when it reached San Francisco."

"Ho!" said the boy. "No locomotive could get across the continent in a day and a night, let alone a little Pony Engine."

"But this Pony Engine *had* to. Did you ever hear of the beaver that clomb the tree?"

"No! Tell——"

"Yes, some other time."

"But how *could* it get across so quick? Just one day!"

"Well perhaps it was a year. Maybe it was the *next* Christmas after that when it got to San Francisco."

The papa set the little girl down, and started to run out of the room, and both of the children ran after him, to pound him.





THE papa had told the story so often that the children knew just exactly what to expect the moment he began. They all knew it as well as he knew it himself, and they could keep him from making mistakes, or forgetting. Sometimes he would go wrong on purpose, or would pretend to forget, and then they had a perfect right to pound him till he quit it. He usually quit pretty soon.

The children liked it because it was very exciting, and at the same time it had no moral, so that when it was all over, they could feel that they had not been excited just for the moral. The first time the little girl heard it she began to cry, when it came to the worst

part; but the boy had heard it so much by that time that he did not mind it in the least, and just laughed.

The story was in season any time between Thanksgiving and New Years; but the papa usually began to tell it in the early part of October, when the farmers were getting in their pumpkins, and the children were asking when they were going to have any squash pies, and the boy had made his first jack-o'-lantern.

"Well," the papa said, "once there were two little pumpkin seeds, and one was a good little pumpkin seed, and the other was bad—very proud, and vain, and ambitious."

The papa had told them what ambitious was, and so the children did not stop him when he came to that word; but sometimes he would stop of his own accord, and then if they could not tell what it meant, he would pretend that he was not going on; but he always did go on.

"Well, the farmer took both the seeds out to plant them in the home-patch, because they were a very extra kind of seeds, and he was not going to risk them in the cornfield, among the corn. So before he put them in the ground, he asked each one of them what he wanted to be when he came up, and the good little pumpkin seed said he wanted to come up a pumpkin, and

be made into a pie, and be eaten at Thanksgiving dinner ; and the bad little pumpkin seed said he wanted to come up a morning-glory.

“ ‘Morning-glory!’ says the farmer. ‘I guess you’ll come up a pumpkin-glory, first thing *you* know,’ and then he haw-hawed, and told his son, who was helping him to plant the garden, to keep watch of that particular hill of pumpkins, and see whether that little seed came up a morning-glory or not; and the boy stuck a stick into the hill so he could tell it. But one night the cow got in, and the farmer was so mad, having to get up about one o’clock in the morning to drive the cow out, that he pulled up the stick, without noticing, to whack her over the back with it, and so they lost the place.

“ But the two little pumpkin seeds, they knew where they were well enough, and they lay low, and let the rain and the sun soak in and swell them up ; and then they both began to push, and by and by they got their heads out of the ground, with their shells down over their eyes like caps, and as soon as they could shake them off and look round, the bad little pumpkin vine said to his brother :

“ ‘ Well, what are you going to do now ?’

“ The good little pumpkin vine said, ‘ Oh, I’m

just going to stay here, and grow and grow and put out all the blossoms I can, and let them all drop off but one, and then grow that into the biggest and fattest and sweetest pumpkin that ever was for Thanksgiving pies.'

" 'Well, that's what I am going to do, too,' said the bad little pumpkin vine, 'all but the pies; but I'm not going to stay here to do it. I'm going to that fence over there, where the morning-glories were last summer, and I'm going to show them what a pumpkin-glory is like. I'm just going to cover myself with blossoms; and blossoms that won't shut up, either, when the sun comes out, but 'll stay open, as if they hadn't anything to be ashamed of, and that won't drop off the first day, either. I noticed those morning-glories all last summer, when I was nothing but one of the blossoms myself, and I just made up my mind that as soon as ever I got to be a vine, I would show them a thing or two. Maybe I *can't* be a morning-glory, but I can be a pumpkin-glory, and I guess that's glory enough.'

"It made the cold chills run over the good little vine to hear its brother talk like that, and it begged him not to do it; and it began to cry——

"What's that?" The papa stopped short,

and the boy stopped whispering in his sister's ear, and she answered :

" He said he bet it was a girl ! " The tears stood in her eyes, and the boy said :

" Well, anyway, it was *like* a girl."

" Very well, sir ! " said the papa. " And supposing it was ? Which is better : to stay quietly at home, and do your duty, and grow up, and be eaten in a pie at Thanksgiving, or go gadding all over the garden, and climbing fences, and everything ? The good little pumpkin vine was perfectly right, and the bad little pumpkin would have been saved a good deal if it had minded its little sister.

" The farmer was pretty busy that summer, and after the first two or three hoeings he had to leave the two pumpkin vines to the boy that had helped him to plant the seed, and the boy had to go fishing so much, and then in swimming, that he perfectly neglected them, and let them run wild, if they wanted to ; and if the good little pumpkin vine had not been the best little pumpkin vine that ever was, it *would* have run wild. But it just stayed where it was, and thickened up, and covered itself with blossoms, till it was like one mass of gold. It was very fond of all its blossoms, and it couldn't bear hardly to think of losing any of them ; but it

knew they couldn't every one grow up to be a very large pumpkin, and so it let them gradually drop off till it only had one left, and then it just gave all its attention to that one, and did everything it could to make it grow into the kind of pumpkin it said it would.

"All this time the bad little pumpkin vine was carrying out its plan of being a pumpkin-glory. In the first place it found out that if it expected to get through by fall it couldn't fool much putting out a lot of blossoms and waiting for them to drop off before it began to devote itself to business. The fence was a good piece off, and it had to reach the fence in the first place, for there wouldn't be any fun in being a pumpkin-glory down where nobody could see you.

"So the bad little pumpkin vine began to pull and stretch toward the fence, and sometimes it thought it would surely snap in two, it pulled and stretched so hard. But besides the pulling and stretching, it had to hide, and go round, because if it had been seen it wouldn't have been allowed to go to the fence. It was a good thing there were so many weeds that the boy was too lazy to pull up, and the bad little pumpkin vine could hide among. But then they were a good deal of a hindrance too, be-

cause they were so thick it could hardly get through them.

“It had to pass some rows of peas that were perfectly awful; they tied themselves to it and tried to keep it back; and there was one hill of cucumbers that acted ridiculously; they said it was a cucumber vine running away from home, and they would have kept it from going any farther if it hadn’t tugged with all its might and main, and got away one night when the cucumbers were sleeping; it was pretty strong, anyway. When it got to the fence at last, it thought it was going to die. It was all pulled out so thin that it wasn’t any thicker than a piece of twine in some places, and its leaves just hung in tatters. It hadn’t had time to put out more than one blossom, and that was such a poor little sickly thing that it could hardly hang on. The question was, How can a pumpkin vine climb a fence, anyway?

“Its knees and elbows were all worn to strings getting there, or that’s what the pumpkin thought, till it wound one of those tendrils round a splinter of the fence, without thinking, and happened to pull, and then it was perfectly surprised to find that it seemed to lift itself off the ground a little. It said to itself, ‘Let’s try a few more,’ and it twisted some more of the

tendrils round some more splinters, and this time it fairly lifted itself off the ground. It said, 'Ah, I see!' as if it had somehow expected to do something of the kind all along; but it had to be pretty careful getting up the fence not to knock its blossom off, for that would have been the end of it; and when it did get up among the morning-glories it almost killed the poor thing, keeping it open night and day, and showing it off in the hottest sun, and not giving it a bit of shade, but just holding it out where it could be seen the whole time. It wasn't very much of a blossom compared with the blossoms on the good little pumpkin vine, but it was bigger than any of the morning-glories, and that was some satisfaction, and the bad little pumpkin vine was as proud as if it was the largest blossom in the world.

"When the blossom's leaves dropped off, and a little pumpkin began to grow on in its place, the vine did everything it could for it; just gave itself up to it, and put all its strength into it. After all, it was a pretty queer looking pumpkin, though. It had to grow hanging down, and not resting on anything, and after it started with a round head, like other pumpkins, its neck began to pull out, and pull out, till it looked like a gourd or a big pear. That's the

way it looked in the fall, hanging from the vine on the fence, when the first light frost came and killed the vine. It was the day when the farmer was gathering his pumpkins in the corn-field, and he just happened to remember the seeds he had planted in the home-patch, and he got out of his wagon to see what had become of them. He was perfectly astonished to see the size of the good little pumpkin ; you could hardly get it into a bushel basket, and he gathered it, and sent it to the county fair, and took the first premium with it."

"How much was the premium?" asked the boy. He yawned ; he had heard all these facts so often before.

"It was fifty cents ; but you see the farmer had to pay two dollars to get a chance to try for the premium at the fair ; and so it was *some* satisfaction. Anyway, he took the premium, and he tried to sell the pumpkin, and when he couldn't, he brought it home and told his wife they must have it for Thanksgiving. The boy had gathered the bad little pumpkin, and kept it from being fed to the cow, it was so funny looking ; and the day before Thanksgiving the farmer found it in the barn, and he said,

" 'Hello ! Here's that little fool pumpkin. Wonder if it thinks it's a morning-glory yet?'

“And the boy said, ‘Oh, father, mayn’t I have it?’

“And the father said, ‘Guess so. What are you going to do with it?’

“But the boy didn’t tell, because he was going to keep it for a surprise; but as soon as his father went out of the barn, he picked up the bad little pumpkin by its long neck, and he kind of balanced it before him, and he said, ‘Well, now, I’m going to make a pumpkin-glory out of *you*!’

“And when the bad little pumpkin heard that, all its seeds fairly rattled in it for joy. The boy took out his knife, and the first thing the pumpkin knew he was cutting a kind of lid off the top of it; it was like getting scalped, but the pumpkin didn’t mind it, because it was just the same as war. And when the boy got the top off he poured the seeds out, and began to scrape the inside as thin as he could without breaking through. It hurt awfully, and nothing but the hope of being a pumpkin-glory could have kept the little pumpkin quiet; but it didn’t say a word, even after the boy had made a mouth for it, with two rows of splendid teeth, and it didn’t cry with either of the eyes he made for it; just winked at him with one of them, and twisted its mouth to one side, so as to let him know it

was in the joke ; and the first thing it did when it got one was to turn up its nose at the good little pumpkin, which the boy's mother came into the barn to get."

"Show how it looked," said the boy.

And the papa twisted his mouth, and winked with one eye, and wrinkled his nose till the little girl begged him to stop. Then he went on :

"The boy hid the bad pumpkin behind him till his mother was gone, because he didn't want her in the secret ; and then he slipped into the house, and put it under his bed. It was pretty lonesome up there in the boy's room—he slept in the garret, and there was nothing but broken furniture besides his bed ; but all day long it could smell the good little pumpkin, boiling and boiling for pies ; and late at night, after the boy had gone to sleep, it could smell the hot pies when they came out of the oven. They smelled splendid, but the bad little pumpkin didn't envy them a bit ; it just said, ' Pooh ! What's twenty pumpkin pies to one pumpkin-glory ? ' "

"It ought to have said 'what *are*,' oughtn't it, papa?" asked the little girl.

"It certainly ought," said the papa. "But if nothing but its grammar had been bad, there

wouldn't have been much to complain of about it."

"I don't suppose it had ever heard much good grammar from the farmer's family," suggested the boy. "Farmers always say cow-cumbers instead of cucumbers."

"Oh, *do* tell us about the Cowcumber, and the Bullcumber, and the little Calfcumbers, papa!" the little girl entreated, and she clasped her hands to show how anxious she was.

"What! And leave off at the most exciting part of the pumpkin-glory?"

The little girl saw what a mistake she had made; the boy just gave her *one look*, and she cowered down into the papa's lap, and the papa went on.

"Well, they had an extra big Thanksgiving at the farmer's that day. Lots of the relations came from out West; the grandmother, who was living with the farmer, was getting pretty old, and every year or two she thought she wasn't going to live very much longer, and she wrote to the relations in Wisconsin, and everywhere, that if they expected to see her alive again, they had better come this time, and bring all their families. She kept doing it till she was about ninety, and then she just concluded to live along and not mind how old she was.

"But this was just before her eighty-ninth birthday, and she had drummed up so many sons and sons-in-law, and daughters and daughters-in-law, and grandsons and great-grandsons, and granddaughters and great-granddaughters, that the house was packed with them. They had to sleep on the floor, a good many of them, and you could hardly step for them; the boys slept in the barn, and they laughed and cut up so the whole night that the roosters thought it was morning, and kept crowing till they made their throats sore, and had to wear wet compresses round them every night for a week afterward."

When the papa said anything like this the children had a right to pound him, but they were so anxious not to have him stop, that this time they did not do it. They said, "Go on, go on!" and the little girl said, "And then the tables!"

"Tables? Well, I should think so! They got all the tables there were in the house, up stairs and down, for dinner Thanksgiving Day, and they took the grandmother's work-stand and put it at the head, and she sat down there; only she was so used to knitting by that table that she kept looking for her knitting-needles all through dinner, and couldn't seem to remem-

ber what it was she was missing. The other end of the table was the carpenter's bench that they brought in out of the barn, and they put the youngest and funniest papa at that.

"The tables stretched from the kitchen into the dining-room, and clear through that out into the hall, and across into the parlor. They hadn't table-cloths enough to go the whole length, and the end of the carpenter's bench, where the funniest papa sat, was bare, and all through dinner-time he kept making fun. The vise was right at the corner, and when he got his help of turkey he pretended that it was so tough he had to fasten the bone in the vise and cut the meat off with his knife like a draw-shave."

"It was the drumstick, I suppose, papa?" said the boy. "A turkey's drumstick is all full of little wooden splinters, anyway."

"And what did the mamma say?" asked the little girl.

"Oh, she kept saying, 'Now you behave!' and, 'Well, I should think you'd be ashamed!' but the funniest papa didn't mind her a bit; and everybody laughed till they could hardly stand it. All this time the boys were out in the barn, waiting for the second table, and playing round. The farmer's boy went up to his room over the wood-shed, and got in at the garret window, and

brought out the pumpkin-glory. Only he began to slip when he was coming down the roof, and he'd have slipped clear off if he hadn't caught his trousers on a shingle-nail, and stuck. It made a pretty bad tear, but the other boys pinned it up so that it wouldn't show, and the pumpkin-glory wasn't hurt a bit.

"They all said that it was about the best jack-o'-lantern they almost ever saw, on account of the long neck there was to it; and they made a plan to stick the end of the neck into the top of the pump, and have fun hearing what the folks would say when they came out after dark and saw it all lit up; and then they noticed the pigpen at the corner of the barn, and began to plague the pig, and so many of them got up on the pen that they broke the middle board off; and they didn't like to nail it on again because it was Thanksgiving Day, and you mustn't hammer or anything; so they just stuck it up in its place with a piece of wood against it, and the boy said he would fix it in the morning.

"The grown folks stayed so long at the table that it was nearly dark when the boys got to it, and they would have been almost starved if the farm-boy hadn't brought out apples and doughnuts every little while. As it was, they were pretty hungry, and they began on the

pumpkin pie at once, so as to keep eating till the mother and the other mothers that were helping could get some of the things out of the oven that had been keeping hot for the boys. The pie was so nice that they kept eating at it all along, and the mother told them about the good little pumpkin that it was made of, and how the good little pumpkin had never had any wish from the time it was nothing but a seed, except to grow up and be made into pies and eaten at Thanksgiving; and they must all try to be good, too, and grow up and do likewise.

“The boys didn’t say anything, because their mouths were so full, but they looked at each other and winked their left eyes. There were about forty or fifty of them, and when they all winked their left eyes it made it so dark you could hardly see; and the mother got the lamp; but the other mothers saw what the boys were doing, and they just shook them till they opened their eyes and stopped their mischief.”

“Show how they looked!” said the boy.

“I can’t show how fifty boys looked,” said the papa. “But they looked a good deal like the pumpkin-glory that was waiting quietly in the barn for them to get through and come out and have some fun with it. When they had all eaten so much that they could hardly stand up,

they got down from the table, and grabbed their hats, and started for the door. But they had to go out the back way, because the table took up the front entry, and that gave the farmer's boy a chance to find a piece of candle out in the kitchen and some matches; and then they rushed to the barn.

It was so dark there already that they thought they had better light up the pumpkin-glory and try it. They lit it up, and it worked splendidly; but they forgot to put out the match, and it caught some straw on the barn floor, and a little more and it would have burnt the barn down. The boys stamped the fire out in about half a second; and after that they waited till it was dark outside before they lit up the pumpkin-glory again. Then they all bent down over it to keep the wind from blowing the match anywhere, and pretty soon it was lit up, and the farmer's boy took the pumpkin-glory by its long neck, and stuck the point in the hole in the top of the pump; and just then the funniest papa came round the corner of the wood-house, and said:

“ ‘What have you got there, boys? Jack-o'-lantern? Well, well. That's a good one.’

“He came up and looked at the pumpkin-glory, and he bent back and he bent forward,

and he doubled down and he straightened up, and laughed till the boys thought he was going to kill himself.

“ They had all intended to burst into an Indian yell, and dance round the pumpkin-glory ; but the funniest papa said, ‘ Now, all you fellows keep still half a minute,’ and the next thing they knew he ran into the house and came out, walking his wife before him with both his hands over her eyes. Then the boys saw he was going to have some fun with her, and they kept as still as mice, and waited till he walked her up to the pumpkin-glory ; and she was saying all the time, ‘ Now, John, if this is some of your fooling, I’ll *give* it to you.’

“ When he got her close up he took away his hands, and she gave a kind of a whoop, and then she began to laugh, the pumpkin-glory *was* so funny, and to chase the funniest papa all round the yard to box his ears, and as soon as she had boxed them she said, ‘ Now let’s go in and send the rest out,’ and in about a quarter of a second all the other papas came out, holding their hands over the other mothers’ eyes till they got them up to the pumpkin-glory ; and then there was such a yelling and laughing and chasing and ear-boxing that you never heard anything like it ; and all at once the funniest

papa hallooed out: 'Where's gramma? Gramma's got to see it! Grandma'll enjoy it. It's just gramma's kind of joke,' and then the mothers all got round him and said he shouldn't fool the grandmother, anyway; and he said he wasn't going to: he was just going to bring her out and let her see it; and his wife went along with him to watch that he didn't begin acting up.

"The grandmother had been sitting all alone in her room ever since dinner; because she was always afraid somehow that if you enjoyed yourself it was a sign you were going to suffer for it, and she had enjoyed herself a good deal that day, and she was feeling awfully about it. When the funniest papa and his wife came in she said, 'What is it? What is it? Is the world a-burnin' up? Well, you got to wrap up warm, then, or you'll ketch your death o' cold runnin' and then stoppin' to rest with your pores all open!'

"The funniest papa's wife she went up and kissed her, and said, 'No, grandmother, the world's all right,' and then she told her just how it was, and how they wanted her to come out and see the jack-o'-lantern, just to please the children; and she must come, anyway, because it was the funniest jack-o'-lantern there

ever was; and then she told how the funniest papa had fooled her, and then how they had got the other papas to fool the other mothers, and they had all had the greatest fun then you ever saw. All the time she kept putting on her things for her, and the grandmother seemed to get quite in the notion, and she laughed a little, and they thought she was going to enjoy it as much as anybody; they really did, because they were all very tender of her, and they wouldn't have scared her for anything, and everybody kept cheering her up and telling her how much they knew she would like it, till they got her to the pump.

The little pumpkin-glory was feeling awfully proud and self-satisfied; for it had never seen any flower or any vegetable treated with half so much honor by human beings. It wasn't sure at first that it was very nice to be laughed at so much, but after a while it began to conclude that the papas and the mammas were just laughing at the joke of the whole thing. When the old grandmother got up close, it thought it would do something extra to please her; or else the heat of the candle had dried it up so that it cracked without intending to. Anyway, it tried to give a very broad grin, and all of a sudden it split its mouth from ear to ear."

"You didn't say it had any ears before," said the boy.

"No; it had them behind," said the papa; and the boy felt like giving him just one pound; but he thought it might stop the story, and so he let the papa go on.

"As soon as the grandmother saw it open its mouth that way she just gave one scream, 'My sakes! It's comin' to life!' And she threw up her arms, and she threw up her feet, and if the funniest papa hadn't been there to catch her, and if there hadn't been forty or fifty other sons and daughters, and grandsons and daughters and great-grandsons and great-granddaughters, very likely she might have fallen.

"As it was, they piled round her, and kept her up; but there were so many of them they jostled the pump, and the first thing the pumpkin-glory knew, it fell down and burst open; and the pig that the boys had plagued, and that had kept squealing all the time because it thought the people had come out to feed it, knocked the loose board off its pen, and flew out and gobbled the pumpkin-glory up, candle and all, and that was the end of the proud little pumpkin-glory."

"And when the pig ate the candle it looked

like the magician when he puts burning tow in his mouth," said the boy.

"Exactly," said the papa.

The children were both silent for a moment. Then the boy said, "This story never had any moral, I believe, papa?"

"Not a bit," said the papa. "Unless," he added, "the moral was that you had better not be ambitious, unless you want to come to the sad end of this proud little pumpkin-glory."

"Why, but the good little pumpkin was eaten up, too," said the boy.

"That's true," the papa acknowledged.

"Well," said the little girl, "there's a great deal of difference between being eaten by persons and eaten by pigs."

"All the difference in the world," said the papa; and he laughed, and ran out of the library before the boy could get at him.



PART II
BOYHOOD LORE



I SOMETIMES wonder how much a boy's manners and customs have changed since my boy's time. Of course they differ somewhat from generation to generation, and from East to West and North to South, but not so much, I believe, as grown people are apt to think. Everywhere and always the world of boys is outside of the laws that govern the grown-up world, and it has its unwritten rules, which are handed down from old to young, and are lived into and lived out of, but are binding, through all vicissitudes, upon the great body of boys between six and twelve years old.

No boy can violate them without losing his

standing among the other boys, and he cannot enter into their world without coming under them. He must do *this*, and must not do *that*; he obeys, but he does not know why, any more than the far-off savages from whom his customs seem mostly to have come. His world is all in and through the world of men and women, but no man or woman can get into it any more than if it were a world of invisible beings. It has its own standards and superstitions, and these are often of a ferocity which one would scarcely imagine in after-life.

It is a great pity that fathers and mothers cannot get into that world; but they cannot, and it is only by accident that they can catch some glimpse of what goes on in it. No doubt it will be civilized in time, but it will be very slowly; and in the meanwhile it is only in some of its milder manners and customs that the boy's world can be studied.

The first great law was that, whatever happened to you through another boy, whatever hurt or harm he did you, you were to right yourself by thrashing him if you could; but if he was too big, and you could not hope to revenge yourself, then you were to bear the wrong, not only for that time, but for as many times as he chose to inflict it. To tell the

teacher or your mother, or to betray your tormentor to any one outside of the boy's world, was to prove yourself a cry-baby, without honor or self-respect, and unfit to go with the other fellows. They would have the right to mock you, to point at you, and call, "E-e-e, e-e-e, e-e-e!" at you, till you fought them. After that, whether you whipped them or not, there began to be some feeling in your favor again, and they had to stop.

Every boy who came to town from somewhere else, or who moved into a new neighborhood, had to fight the old residents. There was no reason for this, except that he was a stranger, and there appeared to be no other means of making his acquaintance. If he was generally whipped he became subject to the local tribe, as the Delawares were to the Iroquois in the last century; if he whipped the other boys, then they adopted him into their tribe and he became a leader among them.

When you moved away from a neighborhood you did not lose all your rights in it; you did not have to fight when you went back to see the boys; but if one of them met you in your new precinct, you might have to fight with him; and perhaps, if he was a boy who had been in the habit of whipping you, you were quite ready

to do so. When my boy's family left the Smith house, one of the boys from that neighborhood came up to see him at the Falconer house, and tried to carry things with a high hand, as he had always done. Then my boy fought him. My boy was beaten, but the difference was that, if he had not been on new ground, he would have been beaten without daring to fight.

His mother witnessed the combat, and came out and shamed him for his behavior, and made them friends over some sugar-cakes. But after that the boys of the Smith neighborhood understood that my boy would not be whipped without fighting. The home instruction was all against fighting; my boy was taught that it was not only wicked, but foolish; that if it was wrong to strike it was just as wrong to strike back; that two wrongs never made a right, and so on. But all this was not of the least effect with a hot temper amid the trials of life in the Boy's Town.

There were some boys of such standing as bullies and such wide fame that they could range all neighborhoods of the town without fear of being molested or made to pass under the yoke anywhere. My boy had always heard of one of these bullies, whose very name, Buz Simpson, carried terror with it; but he

had never seen him, because he lived in the unknown region bordering on the river south of the Thomas house. One day he suddenly appeared when my boy was playing marbles with some fellows in front of the Falconer house, attended by two or three other boys from below the Sycamore Grove. He was small and insignificant, but such was the fear his name inspired that my boy and his friends cowered before him, though some of them were no mean fighters themselves.

They seemed to know by instinct that this was Buz Simpson, and they stood patiently by while he kicked their marbles out of the ring and broke up their game, and, after staying awhile to cover them with shame and insult, pressed on with his followers. If it had been death to resist him, they could not have dreamed less of doing so; and though this outrage took place under my boy's own windows, and a single word would have brought aid (for the mere sight of any boy's mother could put to flight a whole army of other boys), he never dreamed of calling for help.

That would have been a weakness which would not only have marked him forever as a cry-baby, but an indecorum too gross for words. It would have been as if, when once

the boys were playing trip at school, and a boy tripped him, and he lay quivering and panting on the ground, he had got up as soon as he could catch his breath and gone in and told the teacher ; or as if, when the fellows were playing soak-about, and he got hit in the pit of the stomach with a hard ball, he had complained of the fellow who threw it.

There were some things so base that a boy could not do them ; and what happened out of doors, and strictly within the boy's world, had to be kept sacredly secret among the boys. For instance, if you had been beguiled, as a little boy, into being the last in the game of snap-the-whip, and the snap sent you rolling head over heels on the hard ground, and skinned your nose and tore your trousers, you could cry from the pain without disgrace, and some of the fellows would come up and try to comfort you ; but you were bound in honor not to appeal to the teacher, and you were expected to use every device to get the blood off you before you went in, and to hide the tear in your trousers. Of course, the tear and the blood could not be kept from the anxious eyes at home, but even there you were expected not to say just what boys did it.

They were by no means the worst boys who

did such things, but only the most thoughtless. Still, there was a public opinion in the Boy's Town which ruled out certain tricks, and gave the boys who played them the name of being "mean." One of these was boring a hole in the edge of your school-desk to meet a shaft sunk from the top, which you filled with slate-pencil dust. Then, if you were that kind of boy, you got some little chap to put his eye close to the shaft, with the hope of seeing Niagara Falls, and set your lips to the hole in the edge, and blew his eye full of pencil-dust. This was mean; and it was also mean to get some unsuspecting child to close the end of an elderwood tube with his thumb, and look hard at you, while you showed him Germany. You did this by pulling a string below the tube, and running a needle into his thumb. My boy discovered Germany in this way long before he knew where or what Germany was.

I do not know why, if these abominable cruelties were thought mean, it was held lawful to cover a stone with dust and get a boy, not in the secret, to kick the pile over with his bare foot. It was perfectly good form, also, to get a boy, if you could, to shut his eyes, and then lead him into a mud-puddle or a thicket of briars or nettles, or to fool him in any heartless

way, such as promising to pump easy when he put his mouth to the pump-spout, and then coming down on the pump-handle with a rush that flooded him with water and sent him off blowing the tide from his nostrils like a whale.

Perhaps these things were permitted because the sight of the victim's suffering was so funny. Half the pleasure in fighting wasps or bumble-bees was in killing them and destroying their nests; the other half was in seeing the fellows get stung. If you could fool a fellow into a mass-meeting of bumble-bees, and see him lead them off in a steeple-chase, it was right and fair to do so. But there were other cases in which deceit was not allowable. For instance, if you appeared on the playground with an apple, and all the boys came whooping round, "You know *me*, Jimmy!" "You know your uncle!" "You know your grandfather!" and you began to sell out bites at three pins for a lady-bite and six pins for a hog-bite, and a boy bought a lady-bite and then took a hog-bite, he was held in contempt, and could by no means pass it off for a good joke on you; it was considered mean.

In the Boy's Town there was almost as much stone-throwing as there was in Florence in the

good old times. There was a great abundance of the finest kind of pebbles, from the size of a robin's egg upward, smooth and shapely, which the boys called rocks. They were always stoning something, birds, or dogs, or mere marks, but most of the time they were stoning one another. They came out of their houses, or front yards, and began to throw stones, when they were on perfectly good terms, and they usually threw stones in parting for the day. They stoned a boy who left a group singly, and it was lawful for him to throw stones back at the rest, if the whim took him, when he got a little way off. With all this stone-throwing, very little harm was done, though now and then a stone took a boy on the skull, and raised a lump of its own size. Then the other boys knew, by the roar of rage and pain he set up, that he had been hit, and ran home and left him to his fate.

Their fights were mostly informal scuffles, on and off in a flash, and conducted with none of the ceremony which I have read of concerning the fights of English boys. It was believed that some of the fellows knew how to box, and all the fellows intended to learn, but nobody ever did. The fights sprang usually out of some trouble of the moment ; but at times they

were arranged to settle some question of moral or physical superiority. Then one boy put a chip on his shoulder and dared the other to knock it off. It took a great while to bring the champions to blows, and I have known the mere preparatory insults of a fight of this kind to wear out the spirit of the combatants and the patience of the spectators, so that not a blow was struck, finally, and the whole affair fell through.

Though they were so quarrelsome among themselves, the boys that my boy went with never molested girls. They mostly ignored them; but they would have scorned to hurt a girl almost as much as they would have scorned to play with one. Of course while they were very little they played with girls; and after they began to be big boys, eleven or twelve years old, they began to pay girls some attention; but for the rest they simply left them out of the question, except at parties, when the games obliged them to take some notice of the girls. Even then, however, it was not good form for a boy to be greatly interested in them; and he had to conceal any little fancy he had about this girl or that unless he wanted to be considered soft by the other fellows.

When they were having fun they did not

want to have any girls around ; but in the back yard a boy might play teeter or seesaw, or some such thing, with his sisters and their friends, without losing caste, though such things were not encouraged. On the other hand, a boy was bound to defend them against anything that he thought slighting or insulting ; and you did not have to verify the fact that anything had been said or done ; you merely had to hear that it had.

It once fell to my boy to avenge such a reported wrong from a boy who had not many friends at school, a timid creature whom the mere accusation frightened half out of his wits, and who wildly protested his innocence. He ran, and my boy followed with the other boys after him till they overtook the culprit and brought him to bay against a high board fence ; and there my boy struck him in his imploring face. He tried to feel like a righteous champion, but he felt like a brutal ruffian. He long had the sight of that terrified, weeping face, and with shame and sickness of heart he cowered before it. It was pretty nearly the last of his fighting ; and though he came off victor, he felt that he would rather be beaten himself than do another such act of justice. In fact, it seems best to be very careful how we try to do jus-

tice in this world, and to leave retribution of all kinds to God, who really knows about things; and content ourselves as much as possible with mercy, whose mistakes are not so irreparable.

The boys had very little to do with the inside of one another's houses. They would follow a boy to his door, and wait for him to come out; and they would sometimes get him to go in and ask his mother for crullers or sugar-cakes; when they came to see him they never went indoors for him, but stood on the sidewalk and called him with a peculiar cry, something like "E-oo-we, e-oo-wee!" and threw stones at trees, or anything, till he came out. If he did not come, after a reasonable time, they knew he was not there, or that his mother would not let him come. A fellow was kept in that way, now and then. If a fellow's mother came to the door the boys always ran.

The mother represented the family sovereignty; the father was seldom seen, and he counted for little or nothing among the outside boys. It was the mother who could say whether a boy might go fishing or in swimming, and she was held a good mother or not according as she habitually said yes or no. There was no other standard of goodness for mothers

in the boy's world, and could be none; and a bad mother might be outwitted by any device that the other boys could suggest to her boy. Such a boy was always willing to listen to any suggestion, and no boy took it hard if the other fellows made fun when their plan got him into trouble at home. If a boy came out after some such experience with his face wet, and his eyes red, and his lips swollen, of course you had to laugh; he expected it and you expected him to stone you for laughing.

When a boy's mother had company, he went and hid till the guests were gone, or only came out of concealment to get some sort of sly lunch. If the other fellows' mothers were there, he might be a little bolder, and bring out cake from the second table. But he had to be pretty careful how he conformed to any of the usages of grown-up society. A fellow who brushed his hair, and put on shoes, and came into the parlor when there was company, was not well seen among the fellows; he was regarded in some degree as a girl-boy; a boy who wished to stand well with other boys kept in the wood-shed, and only went in as far as the kitchen to get things for his guests in the back-yard.

Yet there were mothers who would make

a boy put on a collar when they had company, and disgrace him before the world by making him stay round and help; they acted as if they had no sense and no pity; but such mothers were rare.

Most mothers yielded to public opinion and let their boys leave the house, and wear just what they always wore. I have told how little they wore in summer. Of course in winter they had to put on more things. In those days knickerbockers were unknown, and if a boy had appeared in short pants and long stockings he would have been thought dressed like a circus-actor.

Boys wore long pantaloons, like men, as soon as they put off skirts, and they wore jackets or roundabouts such as the English boys still wear at Eton. When the cold weather came they had to put on shoes and stockings, or rather long-legged boots, such as are seen now only among lumbermen and teamsters in the country.

Most of the fellows had stoga boots, as heavy as iron and as hard; they were splendid to skate in, they kept your ankles so stiff. Sometimes they greased them to keep the water out; but they never blacked them except on Sunday, and before Saturday they were as red as a rusty

stove-pipe. At night they were always so wet that you could not get them off without a boot-jack, and you could hardly do it anyway; sometimes you got your brother to help you off with them, and then he pulled you all round the room. In the morning they were dry, but just as hard as stone, and you had to soap the heel of your woollen sock (which your grandmother had knitted for you, or maybe some of your aunts) before you could get your foot in, and sometimes the ears of the boot that you pulled it on by would give way, and you would have to stamp your foot in and kick the toe against the mop-board. Then you gasped and limped round, with your feet like fire, till you could get out and limber your boots up in some water somewhere. About noon your chilblains began.

My boy had his secret longing to be a dandy, and once he was so taken with a little silk hat at the hat store that he gave his father no peace till he got it for him. But the very first time he wore it the boys made fun of it, and that was enough. After that he wore it several times with streaming tears; and then he was allowed to lay it aside, and compromise on an unstylish cap of velvet, which he had despised before. I do not know why a velvet cap was

despised, but it was; a cap with a tassel was babyish. The most desired kind of cap was a flat one of blue broadcloth, with a patent-leather peak, and a removable cover of oil-cloth, silk if you were rich, cotton if you were poor; when you had pulled the top of such a cap over on one side, you were dressed for conquest, especially if you wore your hair long. My boy had such a cap, with a silk oil-cloth cover, but his splendor was marred by his short hair.

At one time boots with long, sharp-pointed toes were the fashion, and he so ardently desired a pair of these that fate granted his prayer, but in the ironical spirit which fate usually shows when granting a person's prayers. These boots were of calf-skin, and they had red leather tops, which you could show by letting your pantaloons carelessly catch on the ears; but the smallest pair in town was several sizes too large for my boy. The other boys were not slow to discover the fact, and his martyrdom with these boots began at once. But he was not allowed to give them up as he did the silk hat; he had to wear them out. However, it did not take long to wear out a pair of boots in the Boy's Town. A few weeks' scuffling over the gravelly ground, or a single

day's steady sliding, made them the subjects for half-soling, and then it was a question of only a very little time.

A good many of the boys, though, wore their boots long after they were worn out, and so they did with the rest of their clothes.

I have tried to give some notion of the general distribution of comfort which was never riches in the Boy's Town; but I am afraid that I could not paint the simplicity of things there truly without being misunderstood in these days of great splendor and great squalor. Everybody had enough, but nobody had too much; the richest man in town might be worth twenty thousand dollars. There were distinctions among the grown people, and no doubt there were the social cruelties which are the modern expression of the savage spirit otherwise repressed by civilization; but these were unknown among the boys. Savages they were, but not that kind of savages. They valued a boy for his character and prowess, and it did not matter in the least that he was ragged and dirty. Their mothers might not allow him the run of their kitchens quite so freely as some other boys, but the boys went with him just the same, and they never noticed how little he was washed and dressed. The

best of them had not an overcoat; and under-clothing was unknown among them. When a boy had buttoned up his roundabout, and put on his mittens, and tied his comforter round his neck and over his ears, he was warmly dressed.





CIRCUSES AND SHOWS.

WHAT every boy expected to do, some time or other, was to run off. He expected to do this because the scheme offered an unlimited field to the imagination, and because its fulfilment would give him the highest distinction among the other fellows. To run off was held to be the only way for a boy to right himself against the wrongs and hardships of a boy's life. As far as the Boy's Town was concerned, no boy had anything to complain of; the boys had the



best time in the world there, and in a manner they knew it.

But there were certain things that they felt no boy ought to stand, and these things were sometimes put upon them at school, but usually at home. In fact, nearly all the things that a fellow intended to run off for were done to him by those who ought to have been the kindest to him. Some boys' mothers had the habit of making them stop and do something for them just when they were going away with the fellows. Others would not let them go in swimming as often as they wanted, and, if they saw them with their shirts on wrong side out, would not believe that they could get turned in climbing a fence. Others made them split kindling and carry in wood, and even saw wood. None of these things, in a simple form, was enough to make a boy run off, but they prepared his mind for it, and when complicated with whipping they were just cause for it. Weeding the garden, though, was a thing that almost, in itself, was enough to make a fellow run off.

Not many of the boys really had to saw wood, though a good many of the fellows' fathers had saws and bucks in their wood-sheds. There were public sawyers who did most of the wood-sawing; and they came up with their bucks on

their shoulders, and asked for the job almost as soon as the wood was unloaded before your door. The most popular one with the boys was a poor half-wit known among them as Morn; and he was a favorite with them because he had fits, and because, when he had a fit, he would seem to fly all over the wood-pile.

The boys would leave anything to see Morn in a fit, and he always had a large crowd round him as soon as the cry went out that he was beginning to have one. They watched the hapless creature with grave, unpitying yet not unfriendly interest, too ignorant of the dark ills of life to know how deeply tragic was the spectacle that entertained them, and how awfully present in Morn's contortions was the mystery of God's ways with His children, some of whom He gives to happiness and some to misery. When Morn began to pick himself weakly up, with eyes of pathetic bewilderment, they helped him find his cap, and tried to engage him in conversation for the pleasure of seeing him twist his mouth.

None of the boys ever did run off, except the son of one of the preachers. He was a big boy, whom my boy remotely heard of but never saw, for he lived in another part of the town; but his adventure was known to all the boys,

and his heroism rated high among them. It took nothing from this, in their eyes, that he was found, homesick and crying, in Cincinnati, and was glad to come back—the great fact was that he had run off; nothing could change or annul that. If he had made any mistake, it was in not running off with a circus, for that was the true way of running off. Then, if you were ever seen away from home, you were seen tumbling through a hoop and alighting on the crupper of a bare-backed piebald, and if you ever came home you came home in a gilded chariot, and you flashed upon the domestic circle in flesh-colored tights and spangled breech-cloth. As soon as the circus-bills began to be put up you began to hear that certain boys were going to run off with that circus, and the morning after it left town you heard they had gone, but they always turned up at school just the same. It was believed that the circus-men would take any boy who wanted to go with them, and would fight off his friends if they tried to get him away.

The boys made a very careful study of the circus-bills, and afterward, when the circus came, they held the performance to a strict account for any difference between the feats and their representation. For a fortnight before-

hand they worked themselves up for the arrival of the circus into a fever of fear and hope, for it was always a question with a great many whether they could get their fathers to give them the money to go in. The full price was two bits, and the half-price was a bit, or a Spanish *real*, then a commoner coin than the American dime in the West; and every boy, for that time only, wished to be little enough to look young enough to go in for a bit. Editors of newspapers had a free ticket for every member of their families; and my boy was sure of going to the circus from the first rumor of its coming. But he was none the less deeply thrilled by the coming event, and he was up early on the morning of the great day to go out and meet the circus procession beyond the corporation line.

I do not really know how boys live through the wonder and the glory of such a sight. Once there were two chariots—one held the band, in red-and-blue uniforms, and was drawn by eighteen piebald horses; and the other was drawn by a troop of Shetland ponies, and carried in a vast mythical sea-shell little boys in spangled tights and little girls in the gauze skirts and wings of fairies. There was not a flaw in this splendor to the young eyes that gloated on it,

and that followed it in rapture through every turn and winding of its course in the Boy's Town; nor was there a flaw in the magnificence of the actors and actresses, who came riding two by two in their circus-dresses after the chariots, and looking, some haughty and contemptuous, and others quiet and even bored, as if it were nothing to be part of such a procession. The boys tried to make them out by the pictures and names on the bills: which was Rivers, the bare-back rider, and which was O'Dale, the champion tumbler; which was the India-rubber man, which the ring-master, which the clown.

Covered with dust, gasping with the fatigue of a three hours' run beside the procession, but fresh at heart as in the beginning, they arrived with it on the Commons, where the tent-wagons were already drawn up, and the ring was made, and mighty men were driving the iron-headed tent-stakes, and stretching the ropes of the skeleton of the pavilion, which they were just going to clothe with canvas. The boys were not allowed to come anywhere near, except three or four who got leave to fetch water from a neighboring well, and thought themselves richly paid with half-price tickets. The other boys were proud to pass a word with

them as they went by with their brimming buckets; fellows who had money to go in would have been glad to carry water just for the glory of coming close to the circus-men.

They stood about in twos and threes, and lay upon the grass in groups debating whether a tan-bark ring was better than a sawdust ring; there were different opinions. They came as near the wagons as they dared, and looked at the circus-horses munching hay from the tail-boards, just like common horses. The wagons were left standing outside of the tent; but when it was up, the horses were taken into the dressing-room, and then the boys, with many a backward look at the wide spread of canvas, and the flags and streamers floating over it from the centre-pole (the centre-pole was revered almost like a distinguished personage), ran home to dinner so as to get back good and early, and be among the first to go in.

All round, before the circus doors were open, the doorkeepers of the side-shows were inviting people to come in and see the giants and fat woman and boa constrictors, and there were stands for peanuts and candy and lemonade; the venders cried, "Ice-cold lemonade, from fifteen hundred miles under ground! Walk up, roll up, tumble up, any way to get

up!" The boys thought this brilliant funning, but they had no time to listen after the doors were open, and they had no money to spend on side-shows or dainties, anyway. Inside the tent, they found it dark and cool, and their hearts thumped in their throats with the wild joy of being there; they recognized one another with amaze, as if they had not met for years, and the excitement kept growing as other fellows came in. It was lots of fun, too, watching the country-jakes, as some of the silly town boys called the farmer-folk, and seeing how green they looked, and how some of them tried to act smart with the circus-men that came round with oranges to sell. But the great thing was to see whether fellows that said they were going to hook in really got in. The boys held it to be a high and creditable thing to hook into a show of any kind, but hooking into a circus was something that a fellow ought to be held in special honor for doing. He ran great risks, and if he escaped the vigilance of the massive circus-man who patrolled the outside of the tent with a cowhide and a bulldog, perhaps he merited the fame he was sure to win.

I do not know where boys get some of the notions of morality that govern them. These notions are like the sports and plays that a boy

leaves off as he gets older to the boys that are younger. He outgrows them, and other boys grow into them, and then outgrow them as he did. Perhaps they come down to the boyhood of our time from the boyhood of the race, and the unwritten laws of conduct may have prevailed among the earliest Aryans on the plains of Asia that I now find so strange in a retrospect of the Boy's Town. The standard of honor there was, in a certain way, very high among the boys; they would have despised a thief as he deserved, and I cannot remember one of them who might not have been safely trusted. None of them would have taken an apple out of a market-wagon, or stolen a melon from a farmer who came to town with it; but they would all have thought it fun, if not right, to rob an orchard or hook a water-melon out of a patch. This would have been a foray into the enemy's country, and the fruit of the adventure would have been the same as the plunder of a city, or the capture of a vessel belonging to him on the high seas.

In the same way, if one of the boys had seen a circus-man drop a quarter, he would have hurried to give it back to him, but he would only have been proud to hook into the circus-man's show, and the other fellows would have

been proud of his exploit, too, as something that did honor to them all. As a person who forbade trespass, the circus-man made himself the enemy of every boy who respected himself, and challenged him to use any sort of trick to get in. There was not a boy in the crowd that my boy went with who would have been allowed to hook into a circus by his parents; yet hooking in was an ideal that was cherished among them, that was talked of, and that was even sometimes attempted, though not often.

Once, when a fellow really hooked in, and joined the crowd that had paid, one of the fellows could not stand it. He asked him just how and where he got in, and then he went to the door and got back his money from the doorkeeper upon the plea that he did not feel well; and in five or ten minutes he was back among the boys, a hero of such moral grandeur as would be hard to describe. Not one of the fellows saw him as he really was—a little lying, thievish scoundrel. Not even my boy saw him so, though he had on some other points of personal honesty the most fantastic scruples.

The boys liked to be at the circus early so as to make sure of the grand entry of the performers into the ring, where they caracolled round on horseback, and gave a delicious fore-

taste of the wonders to come. The fellows were united in this, but upon other matters feeling varied—some liked tumbling best; some the slack-rope; some bare-back riding; some the feats of tossing knives and balls and catching them. There never was more than one ring in those days; and you were not tempted to break your neck and set your eyes forever askew by trying to watch all the things that went on at once in two or three rings. The boys did not miss the smallest feats of any performance, and they enjoyed them every one, not equally, but fully. They had their preferences, of course, as I have hinted; and one of the most popular acts was that where a horse has been trained to misbehave so that nobody can mount him, and after the actors have tried him the ring-master turns to the audience and asks if some gentleman among them wants to try it.

Nobody stirs, till at last a tipsy country-jake is seen making his way down from one of the top seats toward the ring. He can hardly walk, he is so drunk, and the clown has to help him across the ring-board; and even then he trips and rolls over on the sawdust, and has to be pulled to his feet. When they bring him up to the horse, he falls against it; and the little

fellows think he will certainly get killed. But the big boys tell the little fellows to shut up and watch out. The ring-master and the clown manage to get the country-jake on to the broad platform on the horse's back, and then the ring-master cracks his whip, and the two supes who have been holding the horse's head let go, and the horse begins cantering round the ring. The little fellows are just sure the country-jake is going to fall off, he reels and totters so ; but the big boys tell them to keep watching out ; and pretty soon the country-jake begins to straighten up. He begins to unbutton his long, gray overcoat, and then he takes it off and throws it into the ring, where one of the supes catches it.

Then he sticks a short pipe into his mouth, and pulls on an old wool hat, and flourishes a stick that the supe throws to him, and you see that he is an Irishman just come across the sea ; and then off goes another coat, and he comes out a British soldier in white duck trousers and red coat. That comes off and he is an American sailor, with his hands on his hips dancing a hornpipe. Suddenly away flash wig and beard and false-face, the pantaloons are stripped off with the same movement, the actor stoops for the reins lying on the horse's neck, and James Rivers, the greatest three-horse

rider in the world, nimbly capers on the broad pad, and kisses his hand to the shouting and cheering spectators as he dashes from the ring past the braying and bellowing brass band into the dressing-room !

The big boys have known all along that he was not a real country-jake ; but when the trained mule begins, and shakes everybody off just like the horse, and another country-jake gets up and offers to bet that he can ride that mule, nobody can tell whether he is a real country-jake or not. This is always the last thing in the performance, and the boys have seen with heavy hearts many signs openly betokening the end which they knew was at hand. The actors have come out of the dressing-room door, some in their every-day clothes, and some with just overcoats on over their circus-dresses, and they lounge about near the band-stand watching the performance in the ring. Some of the people are already getting up to go out, and stand for this last act, and will not mind the shouts of " Down in front ! Down there ! " which the boys eagerly join in, to eke out their bliss a little longer by keeping away even the appearance of anything transitory in it. The country-jake comes stumbling awkwardly into the ring, but he is perfectly

sober, and he boldly leaps astride the mule, which tries all its arts to shake him off, plunging, kicking, rearing. He sticks on, and everybody cheers him, and the owner of the mule begins to get mad and to make it do more things to shake the country-jake off. At last, with one convulsive spring, it flings him from its back, and dashes into the dressing-room, while the country-jake picks himself up and vanishes among the crowd.

A man mounted on a platform in the ring is imploring the ladies and gentlemen to keep their seats, and to buy tickets for the negro-minstrel entertainment which is to follow, but which is not included in the price of admission. The boys would like to stay, but they have not the money, and they go out clamoring over the performance, and trying to decide which was the best feat. As to which was the best actor, there is never any question; it is the clown, who showed by the way he turned a double somersault that he can do anything, and who chooses to be a clown simply because he is too great a creature to enter into rivalry with the other actors.

There will be another performance in the evening, with real fights outside between the circus-men and the country-jakes, but the boys

do not expect to come ; that would be too much. The boy's brother once stayed away in the afternoon, and went at night with one of the jour printers ; but he was not able to report that the show was better than it was in the afternoon. He did not get home till nearly ten o'clock, though, and he saw the sides of the tent dropped before the people got out ; that was a great thing, and, what was greater yet, and reflected a kind of splendor on the boy at second hand, was that the jour printer and the clown turned out to be old friends. After the circus, the boy actually saw them standing near the centre-pole talking together ; and the next day the jour showed the grease that had dripped on his coat from the candles. Otherwise the boy might have thought it was a dream that someone he knew had talked on equal terms with the clown. The boys were always intending to stay up and see the circus go out of town, and they would have done so, but their mothers would not let them. This may have been one reason why none of them ever ran off with a circus.

As soon as a circus had been in town, the boys began to have circuses of their own, and to practise for them. Everywhere you could see boys upside down, walking on their hands or

standing on them with their legs dangling over, or stayed against house walls. It was easy to stand on your head; one boy stood on his head so much that he had to have it shaved, in the brain fever that he got from standing on it; but that did not stop the other fellows. Another boy fell head downward from a rail where he was skinning the cat, and nearly broke his neck, and made it so sore that it was stiff ever so long. Another boy, who was playing Sampson, almost had his leg torn off by the fellows that were pulling at it with a hook; and he did have the leg of his pantaloons torn off. Nothing could stop the boys but time, or some other play coming in; and circuses lasted a good while. Some of the boys learned to turn hand-springs; anybody could turn cart-wheels; one fellow, across the river, could just run along and throw a somersault and light on his feet; lots of fellows could light on their backs; but if you had a spring-board, or shavings under a bank, like those by the turning-shop, you could practise for somersaults pretty safely.

All the time you were practising you were forming your circus company. The great trouble was not that any boy minded paying five or ten pins to come in, but that so many fellows wanted to belong there were hardly

any left to form an audience. You could get girls, but they did not know anything; they had no sense; if a fellow got hurt, they cried.

Then another thing was, where to have the circus. Of course it was simply hopeless to think of a tent, and a boy's circus was very glad to get a barn. The boy whose father owned the barn had to get it for the circus without his father knowing it; and just as likely as not his mother would hear the noise and come out and break the whole thing up while you were in the very middle of it. Then there were all sorts of anxieties and perplexities about the dress. You could do something by turning your roundabout inside out, and rolling your trousers up as far as they would go; but what a fellow wanted to make him a real circus actor was a long pair of white cotton stockings, and I never knew a fellow that got a pair; I heard of many a fellow who was said to have got a pair; but when you came down to the fact, they vanished like ghosts when you try to verify them. I believe the fellows always expected to get them out of a bureau-drawer or off the clothes-line at home, but failed. In most other ways a boys' circus was always a failure, like most other things boys undertake. They usually broke up under the

strain of rivalry ; everybody wanted to be the clown or ring-master ; or else the boy they got the barn of behaved badly, and went into the house crying, and all the fellows had to run.

There were only two kinds of show known by that name in the Boy's Town : a Minstrel Show, or a performance of burnt-cork minstrels ; and an Animal Show, or a strolling menagerie ; and the boys always meant a menagerie when they spoke of a show, unless they said just what sort of show. The only perfect joy on earth in the way of entertainment, of course, was a circus, but after the circus the show came unquestionably next. It made a processional entry into the town almost as impressive as the circus's, and the boys went out to meet it beyond the corporation line in the same way.

It always had two elephants, at least, and four or five camels, and sometimes there was a giraffe. These headed the procession, the elephants in the very front, with their keepers at their heads, and then the camels, led by halters dangling from their sneering lips and contemptuous noses. After these began to come the show-wagons, with pictures on their sides, very flattering portraits of the wild beasts and birds inside ; lions first, then tigers (never meaner than royal Bengal ones, which the

boys understood to be a superior breed), then leopards, then pumas and panthers; then bears, then jackals and hyenas; then bears and wolves; then kangaroos, musk-oxen, deer, and such harmless cattle; and then ostriches, emus, lyre-birds, birds of Paradise, and all the rest.

From time to time the boys ran back from the elephants and camels to get what good they could out of the scenes in which these hidden wonders were dramatized in acts of rapine or the chase, but they always came forward to the elephants and camels again. Even with them they had to endure a degree of denial, for, although you could see most of the camels' figures, the elephants were so heavily draped that it was a kind of disappointment to look at them. The boys kept as close as they could, and came as near getting under the elephants' feet as the keepers would allow; but, after all, they were driven off a good deal and had to keep stealing back.

They gave the elephants apples and bits of cracker and cake, and some tried to put tobacco into their trunks, though they knew very well that it was nearly certain death to do so; for any elephant that was deceived that way would recognize the boy that did it, and kill him the next time he came, if it was twenty

years afterward. The boys used to believe that the Miami bridge would break down under the elephants if they tried to cross it, and they would have liked to see it do so; but no one ever saw it, perhaps because the elephants always waded the river. Some boys had seen them wading it, and stopping to drink and squirt the water out of their trunks. If an elephant got a boy that had given him tobacco into the river, he would squirt water on him till he drowned him. Still, some boys always tried to give the elephants tobacco, just to see how they would act for the time being.

A show was not so much in favor as a circus, because there was so little performance in the ring. You could go round and look at the animals, mostly very sleepy in their cages, but you were not allowed to poke them through the bars, or anything; and when you took your seat there was nothing much till Herr Driesbach entered the lions' cage, and began to make them jump over his whip. It was some pleasure to see him put his head between the jaws of the great African king of beasts, but the lion never did anything to him, and so the act wanted a true dramatic climax. The boys would really rather have seen a bareback rider, like James Rivers, turn a back-

somersault and light on his horse's crupper, any time, though they respected Herr Driesbach, too; they did not care much for a woman who once went into the lions' cage and made them jump round.

If you had the courage you could go up the ladder into the curtained tower on the elephant's back, and ride round the ring with some of the other fellows; but my boy at least never had the courage; and he never was of those who mounted the trick pony and were shaken off as soon as they got on. It seemed to be a good deal of fun, but he did not dare to risk it; and he had an obscure trouble of mind when, the last thing, four or five ponies were brought out with as many monkeys tied on their backs, and set to run a race round the ring. The monkeys always looked very miserable, and even the one who won the race, and rode round afterward with an American flag in his hand and his cap very much cocked over his left eye, did not seem to cheer up any.

The boys had their own beliefs about the different animals, and one of these concerned the inappeasable ferocity of the zebra. I do not know why the zebra should have had this repute, for he certainly never did anything to deserve it; but, for the matter of that, he was

like all the other animals. Bears were not much esteemed, but they would have been if they could have been really seen hugging anybody to death. It was always hoped that some of the fiercest animals would get away and have to be hunted down, and retaken after they had killed a lot of dogs. If the elephants, some of them, had gone crazy, it would have been something, for then they would have roamed up and down the turnpike smashing buggies and wagons, and had to be shot with the six-pound cannon that was used to celebrate the Fourth of July with.

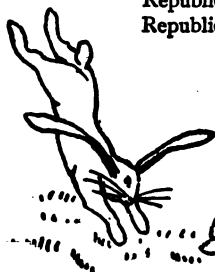
Another thing that was against the show was that the animals were fed after it was out, and you could not see the tigers tearing their prey when the great lumps of beef were thrown them. There was, somehow, not so much chance of hooking into a show as a circus, because the seats did not go all round, and you could be seen under the cages as soon as you got in under the canvas. I never heard of a boy that hooked into a show ; perhaps nobody ever tried.

A show had the same kind of smell as a circus, up to a certain point, and then its smell began to be different. Both smelt of tan-bark or sawdust and trodden grass, and both smelt of lemonade and cigars ; but after that a show

had its own smell of animals. I have found in later life that this is a very offensive smell on a hot day ; but I do not believe a boy ever thinks so ; for him it is just a different smell from a circus smell. There were two other reasons why a show was not as much fun as a circus, and one was that it was thought instructive, and fellows went who were not allowed to go to circuses. But the great reason of all was that you could not have an animal show of your own as you could a circus. You could not get the animals ; and no boy living could act as camel, or a royal Bengal tiger, or an elephant, so as to look the least like one.

Of course you could have negro shows, and the boys often had them ; but they were not much fun, and you were always getting the black on your shirt-sleeves.





AS there are no longer any Whig* boys in the world, the coon can no longer be kept anywhere as a political emblem, I dare say. Even in my boy's time the boys kept coons just for the pleasure of it, and without meaning to elect Whig governors and presidents with them. I do not know how they got them—they traded for them, perhaps, with fellows in the country that had caught them, or perhaps their fathers bought them in market; some people thought they were very good to eat, and, like poultry and other things for the table, they may have been brought alive to market.

*The Whig party was that which afterward became the Republican party, though a great many Democrats joined the Republican party too.



But, anyhow, when a boy had a coon, he had to have a store-box turned open side down to keep it in, behind the house; and he had to have a little door in the box to pull the coon out through when he wanted to show it to other boys, or to look at it himself, which he did forty or fifty times a day, when he first got it. He had to have a small collar for the coon, and a little chain, because the coon would gnaw through a string in a minute.

The coon himself never seemed to take much interest in keeping a coon, or to see much fun or sense in it. He liked to stay inside his box, where he had a bed of hay, and whenever the boy pulled him out, he did his best to bite the boy. He had no tricks; his temper was bad; and there was nothing about him except the rings round his tail, and his political principles, that anybody could care for. He never did anything but bite, and try to get away, or else run back into his box, which smelt, pretty soon, like an animal show; he would not even let a fellow see him eat.

My boy's brother had a coon, which he kept a good while, at a time when there was no election, for the mere satisfaction of keeping a coon. During his captivity the coon bit his keeper repeatedly through the thumb, and, upon the

whole, seemed to prefer him to any other food ; I do not really know what coons eat in a wild state, but this captive coon tasted the blood of nearly that whole family of children. Besides biting and getting away, he never did the slightest thing worth remembering ; as there was no election, he did not even take part in a Whig procession.

He got away two or three times. The first thing his owner would know when he pulled the chain out was that there was no coon at the end of it, and then he would have to poke round the inside of the box pretty carefully with a stick, so as not to get bitten ; after that he would have to see which tree the coon had gone up. It was usually the tall locust-tree in front of the house, and in about half a second all the boys in town would be there, telling the owner of the coon how to get him.

Of course the only way was to climb for the coon, which would be out at the point of a high and slender limb, and would bite you awfully, even if the limb did not break under you, while the boys kept whooping and yelling and hollering out what to do, and Tip, the dog, just howled with excitement. I do not know how that coon was ever caught, but I know that the last time he got away he was not found during

the day, but after nightfall he was discovered by moonlight in the locust-tree. His owner climbed for him, but the coon kept shifting about, and getting higher and higher, and at last he had to be left till morning. In the morning he was not there, nor anywhere.

It had been expected, perhaps, that Tip would watch him, and grab him if he came down, and Tip would have done it probably if he had kept awake. He was a dog of the greatest courage, and he was especially fond of hunting. He had been bitten oftener by that coon than anybody but the coon's owner, but he did not care for biting. He was always getting bitten by rats, but he was the greatest dog for rats that ever was. The boys hunted rats with him at night when they came out of the stables that backed down to the Hydraulic* for water; and a dog who liked above all things to lie asleep on the back step by day, and would no more think of chasing a pig out of the garden than he would think of sitting up all night with a coon, would get frantic about rats, and would perfectly wear himself out hunting them on land and in the water, and keep on after the boys themselves were tired. He was so fond

* A stream carried through the town to furnish water power for mills and factories.

of hunting, anyway, that the sight of a gun would drive him about crazy; he would lick the barrel all over, and wag his tail so hard that it would lift his hind legs off the ground.

I do not know how he came into that family, but I believe he was given to it full grown by somebody. It was some time after my boy failed to buy what he called a Confoundland dog from a colored boy who had it for sale—a pretty puppy, with white and black spots, which he had set his heart on; but Tip more than consoled him. Tip was of no particular breed, and he had no personal beauty; he was of the color of a mouse or an elephant, and his tail was without the smallest grace; it was smooth and round, but it was so strong that he could pull a boy all over the town by it, and usually did; and he had the best, and kindest, and truest ugly old face in the world. He loved the whole human race, and as a watch-dog he was a failure through his trustful nature; he would no more have bitten a person than he would have bitten a pig; but where other dogs were concerned, he was a lion.

He might be lying fast asleep in the backyard, and he usually was, but if a dog passed the front of the house, under a wagon, he would be up and after that dog before you knew what

you were about. He seemed to want to fight country dogs the worst, but any strange dog would do. A good half the time he would come off best ; but, however he came off, he returned to the backyard with his tongue hanging out, and wagging his tail in good humor with all the world. Nothing could stop him, however, where strange dogs were concerned.

He was a Whig dog, of course, as anyone could tell by his name, which was Tippecanoe in full, and was given him because it was the nickname of General Harrison, the great Whig who won the battle of Tippecanoe. The boys' Henry Clay Club used him to pull the little wagon that they went about in singing Whig songs, and he would pull five or six boys, guided simply by a stick which he held in his mouth, and which a boy held on either side of him. But if he caught sight of a dog that he did not know, he would drop that stick and start for that dog as far off as he could see him, spilling the Henry Clay Club out of the wagon piecemeal as he went, and never stopping till he mixed up the strange dog in a fight where it would have been hard to tell which was champion and which was the club wagon. When the fight was over, Tip would come

smilingly back to the fragments of the Henry Clay Club, with pieces of the vehicle sticking about him, and profess himself, in a dog's way, ready to go on with the concert.

Any crowd of boys could get Tip to go off with them, in swimming, or hunting, or simply running races. He was known through the whole town, and beloved for his many endearing qualities of heart. As to his mind, it was perhaps not much to brag of, and he certainly had some defects of character. He was incurably lazy, and his laziness grew upon him as he grew older, till hardly anything but the sight of a gun or a bone would move him. He lost his interest in politics, and, though there is no reason to suppose that he ever became indifferent to his principles, it is certain that he no longer showed his early ardor. He joined the Free-Soil movement in 1848, and supported Van Buren and Adams, but without the zeal he had shown for Henry Clay.

Once a year, as long as the family lived in Boy's Town, the children were anxious about Tip when the dog-law was put in force, and the constables went round shooting all the dogs that were found running at large without muzzles. At this time, when Tip was in danger of going mad and biting people, he showed a most

unseasonable activity, and could hardly be kept in bounds. A dog whose sole delight at other moments was to bask in the summer sun, or dream by the winter fire; would now rouse himself to an interest in everything that was going on in the dangerous world, and make forays into it at all unguarded points. The only thing to do was to muzzle him, and this was done by my boy's brother with a piece of heavy twine, in such a manner as to interfere with Tip's happiness as little as possible. It was a muzzle that need not be removed for either eating, drinking, or fighting; but it satisfied the law, and Tip always came safely through the dog-days, perhaps by favor or affection with the officers, who were so inexorable with some dogs.

Whilst Tip was still in his prime the family of children was further enriched by the possession of a goat; but this did not belong to the whole family, or it was, at least nominally, the property of that eldest brother they all looked up to. I do not know how they came by the goat, any more than I know how they came by Tip; I only know that there came a time when it was already in the family, and that before it was got rid of it was a presence there was no mistaking. Nobody who has

not kept a goat can have any notion of how many different kinds of mischief a goat can get into, without seeming to try, either, but merely by following the impulses of its own goatishness. This one was a nanny-goat, and it answered to the name of Nanny with an intelligence that was otherwise wholly employed in making trouble. It went up and down stairs, from cellar to garret, and in and out of all the rooms, like anybody, with a faint, cynical indifference in the glance of its cold gray eyes that gave no hint of its purposes or performances.

In the chambers it chewed the sheets and pillow-cases on the beds, and in the dining-room, if it found nothing else, it would do its best to eat the table-cloth. Washing-day was a perfect feast for it, for then it would banquet on the shirt-sleeves and stockings that dangled from the clothes-line, and simply glut itself with the family linen and cotton. In default of these dainties, Nanny would gladly eat a chip hat; she was not proud; she would eat a split-basket, if there was nothing else at hand. Once she got up on the kitchen table, and had a perfect orgy with a lot of fresh-baked pumpkin-pies she found there; she cleaned all the pumpkin so neatly out of the pastry-shells that if there had been any more pumpkin left they

could have been filled up again, and nobody could have told the difference. The grandmother, who was visiting in the house at the time, declared to the mother that it would serve the father and the boys just right if she did fill these very shells up and give them to the father and the boys to eat. But I believe this was not done, and it was only suggested in a moment of awful exasperation, and because it was the father who was to blame for letting the boys keep the goat.

The mother was always saying that the goat should not stay in the house another day, but she had not the heart to insist on its banishment, the children were so fond of it. I do not know why they were fond of it, for it never showed them the least affection, but was always taking the most unfair advantages of them, and it would butt them over whenever it got the chance. It would try to butt them into the well when they leaned down to pull up the bucket from the curb; and if it came out of the house, and saw a boy cracking nuts at the low flat stone the children had in the backyard to crack nuts on, it would pretend that the boy was making motions to insult it, and before he knew what he was about it would fly at him and send him spinning head over heels.

It was not of the least use in the world, and could not be, but the children were allowed to keep it till, one fatal day, when the mother had a number of other ladies to tea, as the fashion used to be in small towns, when they sat down to a comfortable gossip over dainty dishes of stewed chicken, hot biscuit, peach-preserves, sweet tomato-pickles, and pound-cake. That day they all laid off their bonnets on the hall table, and the goat after demurely waiting and watching with its faded eyes, which saw everything and seemed to see nothing, discerned a golden opportunity, and began to make such a supper of bonnet-ribbons as perhaps never fell to a goat's lot in life before. It was detected in its stolen joys just as it had chewed the ribbon of a best bonnet up to the bonnet, and was chased into the backyard; but, as it had swallowed the ribbon without being able to swallow the bonnet, it carried that with it.

The boy who specially owned the goat ran it down in a frenzy of horror and apprehension, and managed to unravel the ribbon from its throat, and get back the bonnet. Then he took the bonnet in and laid it carefully down on the table again, and decided that it would be best to say nothing about the affair. But such a thing as that could not be kept. The goat was known



IT HAD SWALLOWED THE RIBBON WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO SWALLOW THE BONNET.

at once to have done the mischief; and this time it was really sent away. All the children mourned it, and the boy who owned it the most used to go to the house of the people who took it, and who had a high board fence round their yard, and try to catch sight of it through the cracks. When he called "Nanny!" it answered him instantly with a plaintive "Baa!" and then, after a vain interchange of lamentations, he had to come away, and console himself as he could with the pets that were left him.

Among these were a family of white rabbits, which the boys kept in a little hutch at the bottom of the yard. They were of no more use than the goat was, but they were at least not mischievous, and there was only one of them that would bite, and he would not bite if you would take him up close behind the ears, so that he could not get at you. The rest were very good-natured, and would let you smooth them, or put them inside of your shirt-bosom, or anything. They would eat cabbage or bread or apples out of your hand; and it was fun to see their noses twitch. Otherwise they had no accomplishments. All you could do with them was to trade with other boys, or else keep the dogs from them; it was pretty exciting to keep

the dogs from them. Tip was such a good dog that he never dreamed of touching the rabbits.

Of course these boys kept chickens. The favorite chicken in those days was a small white bantam, and the more feathers it had down its legs the better. My boy had a bantam hen that was perfectly white, and so tame that she would run up to him whenever he came into the yard, and follow him round like a dog. When she had chickens she taught them to be just as fond of him, and the tiny little balls of yellow down tumbled fearlessly about in his hands, and pecked the crumbs of bread between his fingers. As they got older they ran with their mother to meet him, and when he sat down on the grass they clambered over him and crept into his shirt-bosom, and crooned softly, as they did when their mother hovered them.

The boy loved them better than anything he ever had; he always saw them safe in the coop at night, and he ran out early in the morning to see how they had got through the night, and to feed them. One fatal morning he found them all scattered dead upon the grass, the mother and every one of her pretty chicks, with no sign upon them of how they had been

killed. He could only guess that they had fallen a prey to rats, or to some owl that had got into their coop ; but, as they had not been torn or carried away, he guessed in vain. He buried them with the sympathy of all the children and all the fellows at school who heard about the affair. It was a real grief ; it was long before he could think of his loss without tears ; and I am not sure there is so much difference of quality in our bereavements ; the loss can hurt more or it can hurt less, but the pang must be always the same in kind.

Besides his goat, my boy's brother kept pigeons, which, again, were like the goats and the rabbits in not being of very much use. They had to be much more carefully looked after than chickens when they were young, they were so helpless in their nests, such mere weak wads of featherless flesh. At first you had to open their bills and poke the food in ; and you had to look out how you gave them water for fear you would drown them ; but when they got a little larger they would drink and eat from your mouth ; and that was some pleasure, for they did not seem to know you from an old pigeon when you took your mouth full of corn or water and fed them. Afterward, when they began to fly, it was fun to keep them, and

make more cots for them, and build them nests in the cots.

But they were not very intelligent pets ; hardly more intelligent than the fish that the boys kept in the large wooden hogshead of rain-water at the corner of the house. They had caught some of the fish when they were quite small, and the fish grew very fast, for there was plenty of food for them in the mosquito-tadpoles that abounded in the hogshead. Then, the boys fed them every day with bread-crumbs and worms. There was one big sunfish that was not afraid of anything ; if you held a worm just over him he would jump out of the water and snatch it. Besides the fish, there was a turtle in the hogshead, and he had a broad chip that he liked to sun himself on. It was fun to watch him resting on this chip, with his nose barely poked out of his shell, and his eyes, with the skin dropped over them, just showing. He had some tricks : he would snap at a stick if you teased him with it, and would let you lift him up by it. That was a good deal of pleasure.

But all these were trifling joys, except maybe Tip and Nanny, compared with the pony which the boys owned in common, and which was the greatest thing that ever came into their

lives. I cannot tell just now how their father came to buy it for them, or where he got it; but I dare say he thought they were about old enough for a pony, and might as well have one. It was a Mexican pony, and, as it appeared on the scene just after the Mexican war, some volunteers may have brought it home. One volunteer brought home a Mexican dog, that was smooth and hairless, with a skin like an elephant, and that was always shivering round with the cold; he was not otherwise a remarkable dog, and I do not know that he ever felt even the warmth of friendship among the boys; his manners were reserved and his temper seemed doubtful.

But the pony never had any trouble with the climate of Southern Ohio (which is indeed hot enough to fry a salamander in summer); and, though his temper was no better than other ponies', he was perfectly approachable. I mean that he was approachable from the side, for it was not well to get where he could bite you or kick you. He was of a bright sorrel color, and he had a brand on one haunch. My boy had an ideal of a pony, conceived from pictures in his reading-books at school, that held its head high and arched its neck, and he strove by means of checks and martingales to make this

real pony conform to the illustrations. But it was of no use; the real pony held its neck straight out like a ewe, or, if reined up, like a camel, and he hung his big head at the end of it with no regard whatever for the ideal.

His caparison was another mortification and failure. What the boy wanted was an English saddle, embroidered on the morocco seat in crimson silk, and furnished with shining steel stirrups. What he had was the framework of a Mexican saddle, covered with rawhide, and cushioned with a blanket; the stirrups were Mexican, too, and clumsily fashioned out of wood. The boys were always talking about getting their father to get them a pad, but they never did it, and they managed as they could with the saddle they had. For the most part they preferred to ride the pony bare-backed, for then they could ride him double, and when they first got him they all wanted to ride him so much that they had to ride him double. They kept him going the whole day long; but after awhile they calmed down enough to take him one at a time, and to let him have a chance for his meals.

They had no regular stable, and the father left the boys to fit up part of the cow-shed for the pony, which they did by throwing part of

the hen-coop open into it. The pigeon-cots were just over his head, and he never could have complained of being lonesome. At first everybody wanted to feed him as well as ride him, and if he had been allowed time for it he might have eaten himself to death. He always tried to bite you or kick you, when you came in with his corn. After awhile the boys got so they forgot him, and nobody wanted to go out and feed the pony, especially after dark; but he knew how to take care of himself, and when he had eaten up everything there was in the cow-shed he would break out and eat up everything there was in the yard.

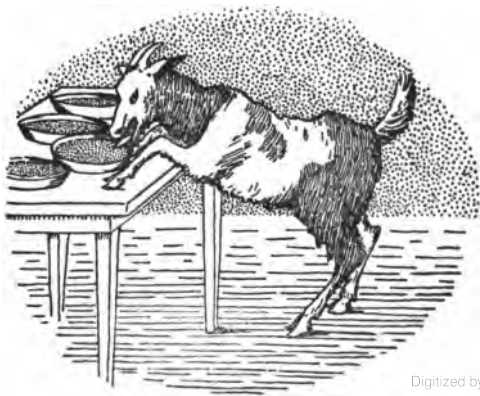
The boys got lots of good out of him. When you were once on his back you were pretty safe, for he was so lazy that he would not think of running away, and there was no danger, unless he bounced you off when he trotted; he had a hard trot. The boys wanted to ride him standing up, like circus-actors, and the pony did not mind, but the boys could not stay on, though they practised a good deal, turn about, when the other fellows were riding their horses, standing up, on the Common. He was not of much more use in Indian fights, for he could seldom be lashed into a gallop, and a pony that proposed to walk through an Indian fight was

ridiculous. Still, with the help of imagination, my boy employed him in some scenes of wild Arab life, and hurled the Moorish javelin from him in mid-career, when the pony was flying along at the mad pace of a canal-boat. The pony early gave the boys to understand that they could get very little out of him in the way of herding the family cow. He would let them ride him to the pasture, and he would keep up to the cow on the way home, when she walked, but if they wanted anything more than that they must get some other pony. They tried to use him in carrying papers, but the subscribers objected to have him ridden up to their front doors over the sidewalk, and they had to give it up.

When he became an old story, and there was no competition for him among the brothers, my boy sometimes took him into the woods, and rode him in the wandering bridle-paths, with a thrilling sense of adventure. He did not like to be alone there, and he oftener had the company of a boy who was learning the trade in his father's printing-office. This boy was just between him and his elder brother in age, and he was the good comrade of both; all the family loved him, and made him one of them, and my boy was fond of him because they had some tastes in common that were not very common

among the other boys. They liked the same books, and they both began to write historical romances. My boy's romance was founded on facts of the Conquest of Granada, which he had read of again and again in Washington Irving, with a passionate pity for the Moors, and yet with pride in the grave and noble Spaniards.

He would have given anything to be a Spaniard, and he lived in a dream of some day sallying out upon the Vega before Granada, in silk and steel, with an Arabian charger under him that champed its bit. In the meantime he did what he could with the family pony, and he had long rides in the woods with the other boy, who used to get his father's horse when he was not using it, on Sunday, and race with him through the dangling wild grape-vines and pawpaw thickets, and over the reedy levels of the river, their hearts both bounding with the same high hopes of a world that could never come true.





MY boy used to be afraid of a monument, which stood a long time, or what seemed a long time, in the yard of the tombstone cutter, before it was put up at the grave of a philosopher who imagined the earth as hollow as much of the life is on it. He was a brave officer in the army which held the region against the Indians in the pioneer times; he passed the latter part of his life there, and he died and was buried in the Boy's Town. My boy had to go past the yard when he went to see his grandmother, and even at high-noon the sight

of the officer's monument, and the other grave-stones standing and leaning about, made his flesh creep and his blood run cold. When there were other boys with him he would stop at the door of the shed, where a large German was sawing slabs of marble with a long saw that had no teeth, which he eased every now and then with water from a sponge; but if the boy was alone, and it was getting late in the afternoon, he always ran by the place as fast as he could. He could hardly have told what he was afraid of, but he must have connected the gravestones with ghosts.

His superstitions were not all of the ghastly kind; some of them related to conduct and character. It was noted, long ago, how boys throw stones, for instance, at a tree, and feign to themselves that this thing or that, of great import, will happen or not, as they hit or miss the tree. But my boy had other fancies, which came of things he had read and half understood. In one of his school-books was a story that began, "Charles was an honest boy, but Robert was the name of a thief"—and it went on to show how Charles grew up in the respect and affection of all who knew him by forbearing to steal some oranges which their owner had set for safe-keeping at the heels of

his horse, while Robert was kicked at once (there was a picture that showed him holding his stomach with both hands), and afterward came to a bad end, through attempting to take one.

My boy conceived from the tale that the name of Robert was necessarily associated with crime ; it was long before he outgrew the prejudice ; and this tale and others of a like vindictive virtuousness imbued him with such a desire to lead an upright life that he was rather a bother to his friends with his scruples. A girl at school mislaid a pencil which she thought she had lent him, and he began to have a morbid belief that he must have stolen it ; he became frantic with the mere dread of guilt ; he could not eat or sleep, and it was not till he went to make good the loss with a pencil which his grandfather gave him, that the girl said she had found her pencil in her desk, and saved him from the despair of a self-convicted criminal. After that his father tried to teach him the need of using his reason as well as his conscience concerning himself, and not to be a little simpleton. But he was always in an anguish to restore things to their owners, like the good boys in the story-books, and he suffered pangs of the keenest remorse for the

part he once took in the disposition of a piece of treasure-trove. This was a brown-paper parcel which he found behind a gravestone in the stone-cutter's yard, and which he could not help peeping into.

It was full of raisins, and in the amaze of such a discovery he could not help telling the other boys. They flocked round and swooped down upon the parcel like birds of prey, and left not a raisin behind. In vain he implored them not to stain their souls with this misdeed; neither the law nor the prophets availed; neither the awful shadow of the prison which he cast upon them, nor the fear of the last judgment which he invoked. They said the raisins did not belong to anybody; that the owner had forgotten all about them; that they had just been put there by someone who never intended to come back for them. He went away sorrowing, without touching a raisin (he felt that the touch must have stricken him with death), and far heavier in soul than the hardened accomplices of his sin, of whom he believed himself the worst in having betrayed the presence of the raisins.

He used to talk to himself when he was little, but one day his mother said to him jokingly, "Don't you know that he who talks to himself

has the devil for a listener?" and after that he never dared whisper above his breath when he was alone, though his father and mother had both taught him that there was no devil but his own evil will. He shuddered when he heard a dog howling in the night, for that was a sign that somebody was going to die. If he heard a hen crow, as a hen sometimes would, he stoned her, because it was a sign of the worst kind of luck. He believed that warts came from playing with toads, but you could send them away by saying certain words over them; and he was sorry that he never had any warts, so that he could send them away and see them go; but he could never bear to touch a toad, and so, of course, he could not have warts.

Other boys played with toads, just to show that they were not afraid of having warts; but everyone knew that if you killed a toad your cow would give bloody milk. I dare say the far forefathers of the race knew this, too, when they first began to herd their kine in the birth-place of the Aryan peoples; and perhaps they learned then that if you killed a snake early in the day its tail would live till sundown. My boy killed every snake he could; he thought it somehow a duty; all the boys thought so; they

dimly felt that they were making a just return to the serpent-tribe for the bad behavior of their ancestor in the Garden of Eden. Once, in a cornfield near the Little Reservoir, the boys found, on a thawing day of early spring, knots and bundles of snakes writhing and twisted together in the torpor of their long winter sleep. It was a horrible sight, that afterward haunted my boy's dreams.

He had nightmares which remained as vivid in his thoughts as anything that happened to him by day. There were no poisonous snakes in the region of the Boy's Town, but there were some large black-snakes, and the boys said that if a black-snake got a chance he would run up your leg and tie himself around your body, so that you could not breathe. Nobody had ever seen a black-snake do it, and nobody had ever seen a hoop-snake, but the boys believed there was such a snake, and that he would take his tail in his mouth, when he got after a person, and roll himself along swifter than the fastest race-horse could run. He did not bite, but when he came up with you he would take the point of his tail out of his mouth and strike it into you. If he struck his tail into a tree, the tree would die. My boy had seen a boy who had been chased by a hoop-snake, but he

had not seen the snake, though for the matter of that the boy who had been chased by it had not seen it, either; he did not stop to see it. Another kind of snake that was very strange, was a hair-snake. No one had ever seen it happen, but everyone knew that if you put long horsehairs into a puddle of water and let them stay, they would turn into hair-snakes; and when you drank out of a spring you had to be careful not to swallow a hair-snake, or it would remain in your stomach and grow there.

When you saw a lizard, you had to keep your mouth tight shut, or else the lizard would run down your throat before you knew it. That was what all the boys said, and my boy believed it, though he had never heard of anybody that it happened to. He believed that if you gave a chicken-cock burnt brandy it would lay eggs, and that if you gave a boy burnt brandy it would stop his growing. That was the way the circus-men got their dwarfs, and the India-rubber man kept himself limber by rubbing his joints with rattle-snake oil.

A snake could charm a person, and when you saw a snake you had to kill it before it could get its eye on you, or it would charm you.

Snakes always charmed birds; and there were mysterious powers of the air and forces of nature that a boy had to be on his guard against, just as a bird had to look out for snakes. You must not kill a granddaddy-long-legs, or a lady-bug; it was bad luck. My boy believed, or was afraid he believed, that

“What you dream Monday morning, before daylight,
Will come true, before Saturday night,”

but if it was something bad, you could keep it from coming true by not telling your dream till you had eaten breakfast. He governed his little, foolish, frightened life, not only by the maxims he had learned out of his “*Gesta Romanorum*,” but by common sayings of all sorts, such as

“See a pin and leave it lay
You’ll have bad luck all the day,”

and if ever he tried to rebel against this slavery, and went by a pin in the path, his fears tormented him till he came back and picked it up. He would not put on his left stocking first, for that was bad luck; but besides these superstitions, which were common to all the boys, he invented superstitions of his own, with which

he made his life a burden. He did not know why, but he would not step on the cracks between the paving-stones, and some days he had to touch every tree or post along the sidewalk, as Doctor Johnson did in his time, though the boy had never heard of Doctor Johnson then.

While he was yet a very little fellow, he had the distorted, mistaken piety of childhood. He had an abject terror of dying, but it seemed to him that if a person could die right in the centre aisle of the church, the chances of that person's going straight to heaven would be so uncommonly good that he need have very little anxiety about it. He asked his mother if she did not think so too, holding by her hand as they came out of church together, and he noticed the sort of gravity and even pain with which she and his father received this revelation of his darkling mind. They tried to teach him what they thought of such things; but, though their doctrine caught his fancy and flattered his love of singularity, he was not proof against the crude superstitions of his mates.

The boys said the world was going to be burned up some time, and my boy expected the end with his full share of the trouble that

it must bring to every sinner. His fears were heightened by the fact that his grandfather believed this end was very near at hand, and was prepared for the second coming of Christ at any moment. Those were the days when the minds of many were stirred by this fear or hope; the believers had their ascension robes ready, and some gave away their earthly goods so as not to be cumbered with anything in their heavenly flight. One awful morning, at school, it suddenly became so dark that the scholars could not see to study their lessons, and then the boys knew that the end of the world was coming. There were no clouds, as for a coming storm, but the air was blackened almost to the dusk of night; the school was dismissed, and my boy went home to find the candles lighted, and a strange gloom and silence on everything outside. He remembered entering into this awful time, but he no more remembered coming out of it than if the earth had really passed away in fire and smoke.

He early heard of forebodings and presentiments, and he tried hard against his will to have them, because he was so afraid of having them. For the same reason he did his best, or his worst, to fall into a trance, in which he should

know everything that was going on about him : all the preparations for his funeral, all the sorrow and lamentation, but should be unable to move or speak, and only be saved at the last moment by some one putting a mirror to his lips and finding a little blur of mist on it. Sometimes, when he was beginning to try to write things and to imagine characters, if he imagined a character's dying, then he became afraid he was that character, and was going to die.

Once, he woke up in the night and found the full moon shining into his room in a very strange and phantasmal way, and washing the floor with its pale light, and somehow it came into his mind that he was going to die when he was sixteen years old. He could then only have been nine or ten, but the perverse fear sank deep into his soul, and became an increasing torture till he passed his sixteenth birthday and entered upon the year in which he had appointed himself to die. The agony was then too great for him to bear alone any longer, and with shame he confessed his doom to his father. "Why," his father said, "you are in your seventeenth year now. It is too late for you to die at sixteen," and all the long-gathering load of misery dropped from the boy's soul, and he

lived till his seventeenth birthday, and beyond it, without further trouble. If he had known that he would be in his seventeenth year as soon as he was sixteen, he might have arranged his presentiment differently.





I TELL these things about my boy, not so much because they were peculiar to him as because I think they are, many of them, common to all boys. One tiresome fact about boys is that they are so much alike, or used to be. They did not wish to be so, but they could not help it. They did not even know they were alike; and my boy used to suffer in ways that he believed no boy had ever suffered before; but as he grew older he found that boys had been suffering in exactly the same way from the beginning of time. In the world you will find a great many grown-up boys, with gray beards and grandchildren, who think that they have

been different, their whole lives through, from other people, and are the victims of destiny. That is because, with all their growing, they have never grown to be men, but have remained a sort of cry-baby.

The first thing you have to learn here below is that, in essentials, you are just like everyone else, and that you are different from others only in what is not so much worth while. If you have anything in common with your fellow-creatures, it is something that God gave you ; if you have anything that seems quite your own, it is from your silly self, and is a sort of perversion of what came to you from the Creator who made you out of himself, and had nothing else to make anyone out of. There is not, really, any difference between you and your fellow-creatures ; but only a seeming difference, that flatters and cheats you with a sense of your strangeness, and makes you think you are a remarkable fellow.

There is a difference between boys and men, but it is a difference of self-knowledge chiefly. A boy wants to do everything, because he does not know he cannot ; a man wants to do something, because he knows he cannot do everything ; a boy always fails, and a man sometimes succeeds, because the man knows and the boy

does not know. A man is better than a boy, because he knows better; he has learned by experience that what is a harm to others is a greater harm to himself, and he would rather not do it. But a boy hardly knows what harm is, and he does it mostly without realizing that it hurts.

He cannot invent anything, he can only imitate; and it is easier to imitate evil than good. You can imitate war, but how are you going to imitate peace? So a boy passes his leisure in contriving mischief. If you get another fellow to walk into a wasp's camp, you can see him jump and howl; but if you do not, then nothing at all happens. If you set a dog to chase a cat up a tree, then something has been done; but if you do not set the dog on the cat, then the cat just lies in the sun and sleeps, and you lose your time. If a boy could find out some way of doing good, so that he could be active in it, very likely he would want to do good now and then; but as he cannot, he very seldom wants to do good.

Or, at least, he did not want to do good in my boy's time. Things may be changed now, for I have been talking of boys as they were in the Boy's Town, forty years ago. For anything that I really know to the contrary, a lot

of fellows when they get together now may plot good deeds of all kinds; but when two or more of them were together then, they plotted mischief. When I see five or six boys now, lying under a tree on the grass, and they fall silent as I pass them, I have no right to say that they are not arranging to go and carry some poor widow's winter wood into her shed and pile it neatly up for her, and wish to keep it a secret from everybody; but forty years ago I should have had good reason for thinking that they were debating how to tie a piece of her clothes-line along the ground so that when her orphan boy came out for an armload of wood, after dark, he would trip on it and send his wood flying all over the yard.

This would not be a sign that they were morally any worse than the boys who live nowadays, and who would everyone die rather than do such a cruel thing, but that they had not really thought much about it. I dare say that if a crowd of boys, from eight to eleven years old, got together in these days, they would choose the best boy among them to lead them on in works of kindness and usefulness; but I am very sorry to say that in the Boy's Town such a crowd of boys would have followed the lead of the worst boy as far

as they dared. Not all of them would have been bad, and the worst of them would not have been very bad; but they would have been restless and thoughtless. I am not ready to say that boys now are not wise enough to be good; but in that time and town they certainly were not. In their ideals and ambitions they were foolish, and in most of their intentions they were mischievous. Without realizing that it was evil, they meant more evil than it would have been possible for ten times as many boys to commit. If the half of it were now committed by men, the United States would be such an awful place that the decent people would all want to go and live in Canada.

I have often read, in stories, of boys who were fond of nature, and loved her sublimity and beauty, but I do not believe boys are ever naturally fond of nature. They want to make use of the woods and fields and rivers; and when they become men they find these aspects of nature endeared to them by association, and so they think that they were dear for their own sakes; but the taste for nature is as purely acquired as the taste for poetry or the taste for tomatoes. I have often seen boys wondering at the rainbow, but it was wonder, not admiration, that moved them; and I have seen them

excited by a storm ; but because the storm was tremendous, not because it was beautiful.

I never knew a boy who loved flowers, or cared for their decorative qualities; if any boy had gathered flowers the other boys would have laughed at him; though boys gather every kind of thing that they think will be of the slightest use or profit. I do not believe they appreciate the perfume of flowers, and I am sure that they never mind the most noisome stench or the most loathsome sight. A dead horse will draw a crowd of small boys, when they would pass by a rose-tree in bloom with indifference. Hideous reptiles and insects interest them more than the loveliest form of leaf or blossom. Their senses have none of the delicacy which they acquire in after-life.

They are not cruel—that is, they have no delight in giving pain, as a general thing; but they do cruel things out of curiosity, to see how their victims will act. Still, even in this way, I never saw many cruel things done. If another boy gets hurt they laugh, because it is funny to see him hop or hear him yell; but they do not laugh because they enjoy his pain, though they do not pity him unless they think he is badly hurt; then they are scared, and try to comfort him. To bait a hook they tear an

angleworm into small pieces, or impale a grub without flinching; they go to the slaughter-house and see beeves knocked in the head, without a tremor. They acquaint themselves, at any risk, with all that is going on in the great strange world they have come into; and they do not pick or choose daintily among the facts and objects they encounter.

To them there is neither foul nor fair, clean nor unclean. They have not the least discomfort from being dirty or unkempt, and they certainly find no pleasure in being washed and combed and clad in fresh linen. They do not like to see other boys so; if a boy, sleek-looking and smooth, came among the boys that my boy went with in the Boy's Town, they made it a reproach to him, and hastened to help him spoil his clothes and his nice looks. Some of those boys had hands as hard as horn, cracked open at the knuckles and in the palms, and the crevices blackened with earth or grime; and they taught my boy to believe that he was an inferior and unmanly person, almost the nature of a cry-baby, because his hands were not horn-like, and cracked open, and filled with dirt.

He had comrades enough, and went with everybody, but till he formed that friendship with the queer fellow whom I have told of, he

had no friend among the boys; and I very much doubt whether small boys understand friendship, or can feel it, as they do afterward, in its tenderness and unselfishness. In fact, they have no conception of generosity. They are wasteful with what they do not want at the moment; but their instinct is to get and not to give. In the Boy's Town, if a fellow appeared at his gate with a piece of bread spread with apple-butter and sugar on top, the other fellows flocked round him and tried to flatter him out of bites of it, though they might be at that moment almost bursting with surfeit. To get a bite was so much clear gain, and when they had wheedled one from the owner of the bread, they took as large a bite as their mouths could stretch to, and they had neither shame nor regret for their behavior, but mocked his just resentment.

The instinct of getting, of hoarding, was the motive of all their foraging; they had no other idea of property than the bounty of nature; and this was well enough so far as it went, but their impulse was not to share this bounty with others, but to keep it each for himself. They hoarded nuts and acorns, and hips and haws, and then they wasted them; and they hoarded other things, merely from the greed of getting,

and with no possible expectation of advantage. It might be well enough to catch bees in hollyhocks, and imprison them in underground cells, with flowers for them to make honey from ; but why accumulate fire-flies and even dor-bugs in small brick pens ? Why keep together mussel-shells ; and what did a boy expect to do with all the marbles he won ? You could trade marbles for tops, but they were not money, like pins ; and why were pins money ? Why did the boys instinctively choose them for their currency, and pay everything with them ? There were certain very rigid laws about them, and a bent pin could not be passed among the boys any more than a counterfeit coin among men.

There were fixed prices ; three pins would buy a bite of apple ; six pins would pay your way into a circus ; and so on. But where did these pins come from or go to ; and what did the boys expect to do with them all ? No boy knew. From time to time several boys got together and decided to keep store, and then other boys decided to buy of them with pins ; but there was no calculation in the scheme ; and though I have read of boys, especially in English books, who made a profit out of their fellows, I never knew any boy who had enough

forecast to do it. They were too wildly improvident for anything of the kind, and if they had any virtue at all it was scorn of the vice of stinginess.

They were savages in this as in many other things, but noble savages ; and they were savages in such bravery as they showed. That is, they were venturesome, but not courageous with the steadfast courage of civilized men. They fought, and then ran ; and they never fought except with some real or fancied advantage. They were grave, like Indians, for the most part ; and they were noisy without being gay. They seldom laughed, except at the pain or shame of someone ; I think they had no other conception of a joke, though they told what they thought were funny stories, mostly about some Irishman just come across the sea, but without expecting anyone to laugh. In fact, life was a very serious affair with them. They lived in a state of outlawry, in the midst of invisible terrors, and they knew no rule but that of might.

I am afraid that you may think I am painting a very gloomy picture of the natives of the Boy's Town ; but I do not pretend that what I say of the boys of forty years ago is true of boys nowadays. I understand that boys at the

present time like to go tidily dressed and to keep themselves neat; and that a good many of them carry canes. They would rather go to school than fish, or hunt, or swim, any day; and if one of their teachers were ever to offer them a holiday, they would reject it by a vote of the whole school. They never laugh at a fellow when he hurts himself or tears his clothes. They are noble and self-sacrificing friends, and they carry out all their undertakings. They often have very exciting adventures such as my boy and his mates never had; they rescue one another from shipwreck and Indians; and if ever they are caught in a burning building, or cast away on a desolate island, they know just exactly what to do.

But, I am ashamed to say, it was all very different in the Boy's Town; and I might as well make a clean breast of it, while I am about it. The fellows in that town were everyone dreadfully lazy—that is, they never wanted to do anything they were set to do; but if they set themselves to do anything, they would work themselves to death at it. In this, alone, I understand that they differed by a whole world's difference from the boys of to-day. I am almost afraid to confess how little moral strength most of those long-ago boys had. A fellow would be very good at home—really and truly good—

but as soon as he got out with the other fellows he would yield to almost any temptation to mischief that offered, and if none offered he would go and hunt one up, and would never stop till he had found one, and kept at it till it overcame him.

The spirit of the boy's world is not wicked, but merely savage, as I have often said in this book; it is the spirit of not knowing better. That is, the prevailing spirit is so. Here and there a boy does know better, but he is seldom a leader among boys; and usually he is ashamed of knowing better, and rarely tries to do better than the rest. He would like to please his father and mother, but he dreads the other boys and what they will say; and so the light of home fades from his ignorant soul, and leaves him in the outer darkness of the street. It may be that it must be so; but it seems a great pity; and it seems somehow as if the father and the mother might keep with him in some word, some thought, and be there to help him against himself, whenever he is weak and wavering. The trouble is that the father and mother are too often children in their way, and little more fit to be the guide than he.

But while I am owning to a good deal that seems to me lamentably wrong in the behavior of the Boy's Town boys I ought to remember

one or two things to their credit. They had an ideal of honor, false enough as far as resenting insult went, but true in some other things. They were always respectful to women, and if a boy's mother ever appeared among them, to interfere in behalf of her boy when they were abusing him, they felt the indecorum, but they were careful not to let her feel it. They would not have dreamed of uttering a rude or impudent word to her; they obeyed her, and they were even eager to serve her, if she asked a favor of them.

For the most part, also, they were truthful, and they only told lies when they felt obliged to do so: as when they had been in swimming and said they had not; or as when they wanted to get away from some of the boys, or did not wish the whole crowd to know what they were doing. But they were generally shamefaced in these lies; and the fellows who could lie boldly, and stick to it, were few. In the abstract lying was held in such contempt that if any boy said you were a liar you must strike him. That was not to be borne for an instant, any more than if he had called you a thief.

I never knew a boy who was even reputed to have stolen anything, among all the boys, high and low, who met together and played in a perfect social equality; and cheating in any

game was despised. To break bounds, to invade an orchard or garden, was an adventure which might be permitted; but even this was uncommon, and most of the boys saw the affair in the true light, and would not take part in it, though it was considered fair to knock apples off a tree that hung over the fence; and if you were out walnuting you might get over the fence in extreme cases, and help yourself. If the owner of the orchard was supposed to be stingy, you might do it to plague him. But the standard of honesty was chivalrously high among those boys; and I believe that if ever we have the equality in this world which so many good men have hoped for, theft will be unknown. Dishonesty was rare even among men in the Boy's Town, because there was neither wealth nor poverty there, and all had enough and few too much.



THE STORY OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE

MY father was born in 1837 at Martin's Ferry, Ohio, on the first of March: the day of St. David, the patron saint of Wales. This was a very appropriate birthday, for my grandfather was a pure-blooded Welshman, so that my father is at least half Welsh, as well as partly German, English, Irish, and entirely American.

When he was three years old his parents removed to Hamilton, Ohio, the "Boy's Town," though it was a girl's town too, as far as the family was concerned, for there were three daughters as well as five sons in it. It was in the Boy's Town that my father began to write, though first, like other people in those days, he had to begin to read. Before he had learned to do this he used to invent stories to fit the pictures in his books; but after he had really mastered the art, at the little dame school to which he went, he was constantly reading and re-reading his favorite books. Goldsmith's "History of Greece" he liked the best of all;

then came the "History of Rome," by the same author, closely followed by "Don Quixote," a book on Greek and Roman Mythology, and Irving's "Conquest of Granada." This story of the Moors in Spain charmed him with its magnificence and deeds of hopeless bravery, and at ten he wrote, under its inspiration, a novel of Moorish life, named "Hamet el Zegri," in honor of one of the last kings of Grenada. This was his earliest novel, but he wrote, besides, many poems and tragedies, chiefly on classic subjects, in such moments as he could spare from having a good time with the other boys and from going to school.

Long before this he had graduated from the dame school and was going to a real one, and he tells in the "Boy's Town" how a boy was expected to behave at that school, if he were put back to a lower place in his studies.

"I dare say that boys do not mind this now; they must have grown ever so much wiser since my boy went to school; but in this time, when you were put back, say from the Third Reader to the Second Reader, you took your books and left school. That was what the other boys expected of you, and it was the only thing for you to do if you had the least self-respect, for you were put back to the Second Reader after

having failed to read the Third, and it was a public shame, which nothing but leaving that school could wipe out. The other boys would have a right to mock you if you did not do it; and as soon as the class was dismissed you went to your desk as haughtily as you could, and began putting your books and your slate and your ink-stand together, with defiant glances at the teacher; and then when twelve o'clock came, or four o'clock, and the school was let out, you tucked the bundle under your arm and marched out of the room, with as much majesty as could be made to comport with a chip hat and bare feet; and as you passed the teacher you gave a twist of the head that was meant to carry dismay to the heart of your enemy. I note all these particulars carefully, so as to show the boys of the present day what fools the boys of the past were; though I think they will hardly believe it. My boy was once that kind of fool; but not twice. He left school with all his things at twelve o'clock, and he returned with them at one; for his father and mother did not agree with him about the teacher's behavior in putting him back. No boy's father and mother agreed with him on this point."

As for the good times he had with the other boys, there were so many of them that

it is hard to decide which to mention. He says:

“In the Boy's Town they had regular games and plays, which came and went in a stated order. The first thing in the spring, as soon as the frost began to come out of the ground, they had marbles, which they played till the weather began to be pleasant for the game, and then they left off. There were some mean-spirited fellows who played for fun, but any boy who was anything played for keeps—that is, keeping all the marbles he won. As my boy was skilful at marbles, he was able to start out in the morning with his taw, or the marble he shot with, and a commy, or a brown marble of the lowest value, and come home at night with a pocketful of white-alleys and blood-alleys, striped plasters and bull's-eyes, and crystals, clear and clouded. His gambling was not approved of at home, but it was allowed him because of the hardness of his heart, I suppose, and because it was not thought well to bring him up too strictly; and I suspect it would have been useless to forbid his playing for keeps, though he came to have a bad conscience about it before he gave it up.” His conscience has been growing tenderer on the subject ever since, for, after all, it was gambling, and the longer he

lives the wickeder it seems to him to get something without giving anything in return for it; even if people do this gambling in land or stocks.

By April the weather began to get warm, and then all the boys went barefoot. "About the only drawback to going barefoot was stumping your toe, which you were pretty sure to do when you first took off your shoes, and before you had got used to your new running weight. When you struck your toe against a rock, or anything, you caught it up in your hand, and hopped about a hundred yards before you could bear to put it on the ground. Then you sat down, and held it as tight as you could, and cried over it, till the fellows helped you to the pump to wash the blood off. Then, as soon as you could, you limped home for a rag, and kept pretty quiet about it, so as to get out again without letting on to your mother."

The first of April, itself, they celebrated in various ways. "About the best thing you could do then was to write 'April Fool' on a piece of paper and pin it to a fellow's back, or maybe a girl's, if she was a big girl, and stuck-up, or anything. I do not suppose there is a boy now living who is silly enough to play this trick on anybody, or mean enough to fill an

old hat with rocks and brickbats, and dare a fellow to kick it ; but in the Boy's Town there were some boys who did this ; and then the fellow had to kick the hat, or else come under the shame of having taken a dare. Most of the April-foolings were harmless enough, like saying, 'Oh, see that flock of wild geese flying over!' and, 'What have you got on the back of your coat?' and holloing 'April Fool!' as soon as the person did it. Sometimes a crowd of boys got a bit with a hole in it, and tied a string in it, and laid it on the sidewalk, and then hid in a cellar, and when anybody stooped to pick it up, they pulled it in. That was the greatest fun, especially if the person was stingy ; but the difficulty was to get the bit, whether it had a hole in it or not."

After marbles came the top season. "The boys usually chose a firm, smooth piece of sidewalk, under one of the big trees in the Smith neighborhood, and spun their tops there. A fellow launched his top into the ring, and the rest waited till it began to go to sleep—that is, to settle in one place, and straighten up and spin silently, as if standing still. Then any fellow had a right to peg at it with his top, and if he hit it, he won it ; and if he split it, as

sometimes happened, the fellow that owned it had to give him a top."

Kites came later, and lasted well into the summer. The boys made their own kites and spent a great deal of time and care on them, for kite-making is a delicate art. "At about the same time they began to go in swimming, and they had signs by which they invited each other to go, when they wanted to arrange the matter privately. They really had to be secret at times, for some of the boys were not allowed to go in at all; others were forbidden to go in more than once or twice a day; and as they all had to go in at least three or four times a day, some sort of sign *had* to be used that was understood among themselves alone. Since this is a true history, I had better own that they nearly all, at one time or another, must have told lies about it, either before or after the fact, some habitually, some only in great extremity. Here and there a boy, like my boy's elder brother, would not tell lies at all, even about going in swimming; but by far the greater number bowed to their hard fate, and told them. They promised that they would not go in, and then they said that they had not been in; but Sin, for which they had made this sacrifice, was apt to betray them. Either

they got their shirts on wrong side out, in dressing, or else, while they were in, some enemy came upon them and tied their shirts. There are few cruelties which public opinion in the boys' world condemns, but I am glad to remember, to their honor, that there were not many in that Boy's Town who would tie shirts; and I fervently hope that there is no boy now living who would do it. As the crime is probably extinct, I will say that in those wicked days, if you were such a miscreant, and there was some boy you hated, you stole up and tied the hardest kind of a knot in one or both sleeves of his shirt. Then, if the Evil One put it into your heart, you soaked the knot in water and pounded it with a stone."

Some of the boys' good times were at shows. The circus came every summer, and once a professor of mesmerism stayed for some weeks in the town and gave nightly exhibitions. "He mesmerized numbers of boys, and made them do or think whatever he said. He would give a boy a cane, and then tell him it was a snake, and the boy would throw it away like lightning. He would get a lot of boys, and mount them on chairs, and then tell them that they were at a horse-race, and the boys would gallop, astride of their chairs, round and round, till he stopped

them. Sometimes he would scare them almost to death, with a thunder-storm that he said was coming on; at other times he would make them go in swimming, on the dusty floor, and they would swim all over it in their best clothes, and would think they were in the river."

Of course there were fall and winter games too—football, skating, and a host of others; but my father could not give all his time, even to these engrossing pursuits, or studying. His father was the editor of a country newspaper and had a large family to support, so that, as soon as the boys showed intelligence enough for the work, they were put into the printing-office, and my father began to set type when he was only eight or nine years old.

Living as he did, in a small Western town, he had never seen anyone who wrote books, and he could not understand literature as a profession; but as far as he had any ambition the idea of writing was always a part of it.

This helps to prove his theory, that a man is not a new creature but that he grows out of the boy, and that whatever kind of boy he is, he will probably be the same kind of man. At the end of "A Boy's Town" my father says he is glad to have had a boyhood fully rounded out

with all a boy's interests and pleasures, and he is glad that his lines were cast in the Boy's Town, but he knows, or believes he knows, that whatever is good in him now came from what was good in him then.

His family left Hamilton when he was thirteen, and went to live in Dayton, where my grandfather had bought a paper, which soon failed. This was a very dark time in the family history, and my father had to be in the office setting telegraphic despatches until nearly midnight, and then get up at four or five in the morning to deliver the papers. Even now, he says, he can remember how desperately sleepy he used to be at those early risings, and the delight of Sunday morning, when he could sleep as late as he pleased. Such work made studying impossible, but he still found time to write, and when the family removed to the country, a year later, he went back to school. It was here at some mills which they had christened Eureka, on the Little Miami River, that "My Year in a Log-Cabin" was spent. To the village-bred children, who all had a certain inborn instinct for the dramatic and literary side of it, the log-cabin was an enchanting home, and he makes one understand their delight in it, when he describes it.

“The centre of our life in the cabin was, of course, the fireplace, whose hugeness and whose mighty fires remained a wonder with us. There was a crane in the chimney and dangling pot-hooks, and until the cooking-stove could be set up in an adjoining shed the cooking had to be done on the hearth, and the bread baked in a Dutch oven in the hot ashes. We had always heard of this operation, which was a necessity of early days; and nothing else, perhaps, realized it so vividly for us as the loaf laid in the iron-lidded skillet, which was then covered with ashes and heaped with coals. We sat up late before the big fire at night, our faces burning in the glow, and our backs and feet freezing in the draught that swept in from the imperfectly closing door, and then we boys climbed to our bed in the loft. We reached it by a ladder, which we should have been glad to pull up after us as a protection against Indians, in pioneer fashion; but, with the advancement of modern luxury, the ladder had been nailed to the floor.

“Once aloft, however, we were in a domain sacred to the past. The rude floor rattled and wavered loosely under our tread, and the window in the gable stood open or shut at its own will. There were cracks in the shingles,

through which we could see the stars, when there were stars, and which, when the first snow came, let the flakes sift in upon the floor. I should not like to step out of bed into a snow-wreath in the morning, now; but then I was glad to do it, and so far from thinking that or anything in our life a hardship, I counted it all joy."

It was a gloriously free life, and he tells us that "In those days one went in swimming (we did not say bathing) four or five times a day with advantage and refreshment; anything more was, perhaps, thought unwholesome."

The country around the log cabin was exactly adapted to a boy, and full of adventures, if one had imagination enough to know an adventure when one met it, and he also tells of two real adventures, both very exciting, and much pleasanter to read about than to live through, as most real ones are.

The first happened when he was out hunting squirrels, but, as usual, without much success.

"The only one I ever killed was a black squirrel, which fell from aloft and lodged near the first crotch of a tall elm. The younger brother, who followed me as I followed my elder, climbed up to get the squirrel, but when

he mounted into the crotch he found himself with his back tight against the main branch, and unable either to go up or come down. It was a terrible moment, which he deplored with many tears and vain cries for help.

"It was no longer a question of getting the dead squirrel, but the live boy, to the ground. It appeared to me that to make a rope fast to the limb, and then have him slip down, hand over hand, was the best way; only, we had no rope, and I could not have got it to him if we had. I proposed going for help, but my brother would not consent to be left alone; and, in fact, I could not bear the thought of leaving him perched up there, however securely, fifty feet from the earth. I might have climbed up and pulled him out, but we decided that this would only be swifter destruction.

"I really cannot tell how he contrived to free himself, or why he is not in that tree to this day. The squirrel is."

The other adventure had to do with the mill-race. Nothing, he says, was ever actually drowned in these waters save a pig, "though once one of the grist-miller's children came near giving a touch of tragedy to the waters. He fell into the race, just above the saw-mill gate, and was eddying round into the rush upon its wheel,

when I caught him by his long yellow hair, and pulled him out. His mother came rushing from her door at the outcry we had all set up, and upon perceiving him safe, immediately fell upon him in merited chastisement. No notice, then or thereafter, was taken of his preserver by either of his parents; but I was not the less a hero in my own eyes."

My grandfather had gone to the country with an idea of turning an old saw-mill and grist-mill there into paper mills, and founding a sort of family community in which his brothers and their families were to join him; but the plan failed, and at the end of a year he moved again, and this time to Columbus. There my father first had some of his poems published: two in the *Ohio State Journal* and one in the *Cleveland Leader*; and one can imagine how proud the fifteen-year-old poet was to see them in print. Having got his ideas of writing verse from the English poets, he felt that nightingales, skylarks and primroses were necessary to poetry, but his father constantly advised him to write of things around him, and to use the American birds and flowers that he knew; so, although his first published poem was on spring, it dealt with the earliest warm spell of an Ohio winter, instead of the English

season. This was a step in the direction of what he calls Realism. By this he does not mean making his work like a photograph, in which every detail is as distinct and important as the larger objects, but rather like a good painting, where everything is given in its true relation to the rest. He tries to make each character true to itself, and have it say and do the things which that kind of a person really would under the circumstances.

From Columbus the family went to Ashtabula, another town in Ohio, where my father began to print a story of his own, called "The Independent Candidate," in his father's paper; but one day an old farmer happened into the office and casually remarked that he didn't think much of that story, which so crushed the young author's spirit that he brought it to a sudden end. It was not until fourteen years after this that he recovered enough courage to write another story.

At nineteen he went back to Columbus, to be a reporter in the State Legislature, and a year later he became one of the editors of the *Ohio State Journal*, writing literary notices, poems, and sketches for it. During the same time he published poems in the Eastern papers and in the *Atlantic Monthly*, having once, to his great

pride, two poems in the same number of the magazine, and five in the course of one year. This meant a great deal, as the *Atlantic Monthly* stood for the best American literature, and out of the hundreds of manuscripts which were sent to it every year, only a few could be accepted.

It was in Columbus that he met my mother, who was spending the winter there, but they were not married until after he was sent by Lincoln, as American Consul, to Venice, in 1861. Nothing could have happened more thoroughly delightful to him than those four years in Venice, which was even more Venice under the rule of the Austrians than it is under its present rule of tourists. He speaks, in "Venetian Life," of his instant adoption by the city: "I fancy that the ignorant impression of the earlier days after my arrival need scarcely be set down even in this perishable record; but I would not wholly forget how, though isolated from all acquaintance and alien to the place, I yet felt curiously at home in Venice from the first. I believe it was because I had, after my own fashion, loved the beautiful, that I found the beautiful where it is supreme; full of society and friendship, speaking a language which, even in its unfamiliar form, I could

partly understand, and at once making me a citizen of that Venice from which I shall never be exiled."

His Venetian life lasted until 1865, when he returned to America, and for six months he wrote for the *Nation* in New York. On New Year's eve he met, at Bayard Taylor's house, James T. Fields, the owner of the *Atlantic Monthly*. The next day, in the midst of a blizzard, this publisher called at the office of the *Nation*, and, not finding my father, left a note asking him to become assistant editor of the *Atlantic*.

This was a rather romantic way for a realist to gain his first important literary position, but he entirely approved of it, and in the following March he took his family to Boston, and began his work on the magazine.

It was during the following years, while he lived in Cambridge, that he came to know Longfellow, Holmes, Emerson, Whittier, and many other writers, who made Boston and its neighborhood the centre of the literary America of the time.

Mr. Lowell was a still older friend; he had been very kind and encouraging when my father first sent his poems to the *Atlantic*.

While my father lived in Cambridge he be-

gan to write novels again, a habit that he still continues. The fairy-tales in this book he used to tell to my brother and myself on holiday mornings, to our great delight; but we were very severe critics and instantly suppressed any story we suspected of a serious moral, so that all improving lessons had to be very artfully hidden. He interspersed the fairy-tales with stories about little pigs; but, strange to say, though there were twice as many pig as fairy-tales, they seem to have utterly vanished from our memories. Perhaps we felt the pigs as slightly personal, and so forgot them as promptly as possible.

During the hours when my father was writing, the library door had to be passed on tip-toe, but at other times he was always at our disposal, and a great many uses we found for him. I remember that the anguish of my first going to school was soothed by his drawing me there on a sled, and he invented the most exciting games for us to play at home. One of these, The Charcoal-burner, used particularly to delight us. It began by a poor soldier (whom we took turns in impersonating), returning from the wars and losing his way in the forest as night is coming on. He sees a light in the window of a hut and knocks on the

door, at which the Charcoal-burner (always my father), wakes and asks, with horrid snorts and groans, "Who is it?" This was such a thrilling moment that when you were not acting yourself, you were obliged to hop up and down to relieve your feelings. The Charcoal-burner then invites the soldier to spend the night; in the morning he leads him into the forest, and muttering, "Yes, I'll show you the way out of the wood," he is about to push him into a pit when two good people rush forward and rescue the soldier before they pursue the wicked Charcoal-burner to his lair. This game is best adapted to the morning, for toward night it becomes rather too terrible. In all the games my father invented for us we took turns at the favorite parts, without regard to sex or age, such accidents of fate not being allowed to embitter us; and, while he played with us, gentleness toward one another was the rule.

My father has always believed that men are born equal as well as free, and I think we felt, before we could understand it, his gentleness and courtesy to everyone, and I know we were brought up to consider willfully hurting another's feelings as the selfishness it really is

I am sure that he must have particularly enjoyed writing the stories which you have just been reading in this book, for they are mostly about children, and there is nothing he likes so much as little boys—unless it is little girls.

■

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